

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

#### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

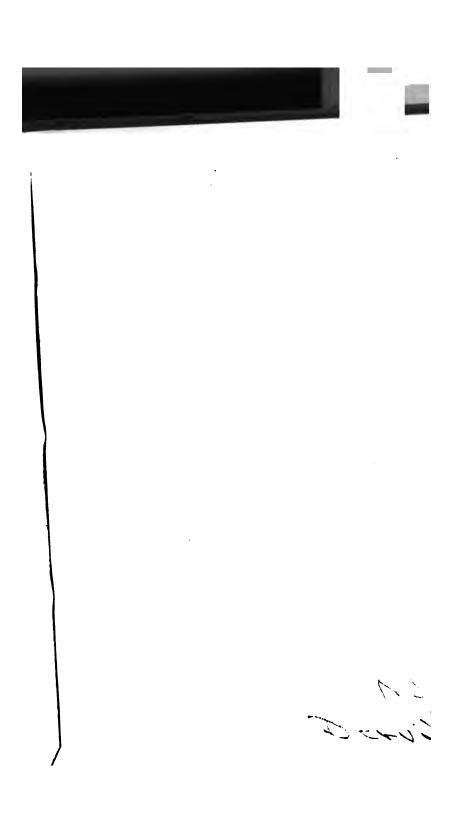
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + Refrain from automated querying Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

#### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/









MC1

•

# THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

A NOVEL

BY

LESLIE DERVILLE



G. W. DILLINGHAM COMPANY PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

El: .



# THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY 285075B ARTOR, LENGE AND TULDEN POUNDATIONS F. 1944 L

COPYRIGHT, 1904, BY
G. W. DILLINGHAM COMPANY

The Other Side of the Story.

Issued May, 1904.

## INDEX TO CHAPTERS

CHAPTER			PAGE
I.	The Fair Wirch of Barcelona	•	9
II.	The Beautiful Maid of Corinth	•	16
III.	Washington	•	23
IV.	Census Beauties	•	30
v.	The Lunch Hour	•	38
VI.	Letter from Miss Margaret Castleton to I	ler	
	Friend, Miss Olive Winston of Malvern		44
VII.	Letter from the Same to the Same		52
VIII.	Letter from the Same to the Same		64
IX.	Letter from Miss Castleton to Dr. Dan Bra	ady	·
	of Barcelona	•	73
X.	Letter from Miss Castleton to Miss Winston		77
XI.	Miss Castleton in Society	•	85
XII.	Love and Wagner		102
XIII.	Letter from Miss Castleton to Miss Winston		109
XIV.	Light Housekeeping		116
XV.	On the Permanent Roll		125
XVI.	Not All the World Loves a Lover		136
XVII.	The Grand Passion		I 5 2
XVIII.	Farewell		165
XIX.	The Merit System		169
- 30-30	44 X50 5	·	,
	* 3 V 9 U 2	•	

#### Index to Chapters 8 PAGE XX. Jermyn the Terrible, and Others 180 XXI. Extenuating Circumstances May Excuse Anonymous Letter . 196 XXII. The Insolence of Office 209 XXIII. Wilmer Coburn . . 2 2 I XXIV. Giant Despair 242 XXV. Clean Hands and a Pure Heart 255 XXVI. To Be or Not To Be . 271 XXVII. Potius Mori quam Foedari . 290 XXVIII. Her Martyrdom Was Not in Vain. 303

### THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

#### CHAPTER I

#### THE FAIR WITCH OF BARCELONA

The autumn winds stirred the many-hued boughs whose leaves, damp with the melted frost, floated aimlessly in the air, fluttered gently to the ground or sought the surface of the water. The river wound its way in and out among the Virginia mountains, and along its banks, on either side by turns, was a railroad, following, as man's best achievements must, the course laid out for it by the master It was early morning, and the blue smoke curled from many a cabin dotting valley and mountain side, as it rose mingling with the haze that wrapped the world in misty blue. A long, trailing volume of smoke marked the path of the Southern express as it sped along the banks whose natural beauties are scarcely sung in song, though much extolled in the story of the advertiser. May some poet arise one day worthy of the theme!

Such were the thoughts that filled a certain little head that morning, with eyes very near the pane of a window in the Pullman car, as they watched the flying panorama of mountain tops and valleys in their gorgeous autumn robes, lying dreamily wrapped in mist.

"I'll do it myself some day!" thought Margaret Castleton, with one of those sudden inspirations which such scenes produce in the mind of ardent youth. She was one of those cultured young ladies of the West who surprise every one by the magnitude and variety of their attainments. One wonders where they learned so much of the world, where they acquired that harmless audacity of speech, that frank sagacity which never wounds because it is so artless, and that air of unrestraint that gives its own perfection of detail to the softer lines of face and brow; that gleam of the eye without which all the charm is lost, because its light alone can warn as well as fascinate, and gives the proper emphasis to words—all these and myriad other charms which combine to make a type unmatched in any other clime.

Her father had been the proprietor of the only hotel in the town of Barcelona, and had given his only daughter every available opportunity to develop and cultivate a naturally quick and comprehensive mind. She had been educated at the State University, had supplemented this by a course in music at the Boston Conservatory, had taken a summer normal course at Chatauqua, a course in physical culture at Monteagle and, finally, a business

course in a commercial school in St. Louis. Besides this, she had broadened her views somewhat by travel. She had once been all through the West, had spent some weeks in Chicago, where she visited relatives, and had also spent a winter in New Orleans with friends. But she had never been to Washington, the goal of her present journey. After her father's death she had lived with her Uncle Dan Brady, the village doctor, but, not caring to burden him any longer, had taken the civil service examination and in due time was appointed to a departmental She looked forward to the novelty of life clerkship. in Washington, as well as to eating the bread of in-She had seen enough of the world to dependence. know that between the life of her village home and that of a large city was a great gulf fixed, and that Washington in particular had snares for unwary feet which are never dreamed of by the multitude. But Miss Castleton was afraid of nothing, and looked forward to Washington with satisfaction and joy. She had always made friends wherever she went.

Born with the rarest of attainments—tact—she did not possess the one most prized by the sex—beauty. She would pass unobserved in a crowd. You would never notice her blue-gray eyes until they once gleamed merrily into yours, as they spoke. You would never single her out on account of her reddish gold hair until you had once met her, and then you would be sure to look for it again. Her

figure would not attract attention, for she was rather slight, of medium height; and yet, when you knew her, you would observe that she was always neatly and becomingly dressed, modishly too, with a certain style of her own, not so dashing as the Western girl or so ultra as the Eastern, but with the best elements of both, softened to Southern grace and toned to Northern strength. She was not beautiful save to those who knew her-a girl of such skill in all the arts that make a girl a genuine girl, that her beauty was somehow a thing taken for granted. She was not beautiful in the common acceptation of the term, and yet many men had praised her beautv. child she had shown a precocious aptitude for saying the right thing at the right time. At college she had led in all the sports and merrymakings, had been the toast-mistress at the class dinners, and her bonmots were the tradition of the alma mater. charms that go to make the woman of fascination in history were hers, save actual beauty and an unscrupulous conscience. She was not beautiful; and yet, in the local papers belonging to the neighboring towns where she occasionally visited, she was referred to as the "beautiful and popular guest of Miss W---" in the columns marked personal, according to the best approved provincial style. In Chicago she was known as "that charming Miss Castleton." She had vied with the belles of the City of Bluffs as well as those of the City of Roses, and among the

beaux of these towns she was described as "the fair witch of Barcelona." In New Orleans her charms were sung in many a song and serenade as the faint music of mandolin or banjo came wafted on waves of moonlight to balconies where beauty held her court. She was not beautiful, but she was clever enough to so dazzle the eyes of the beholder that he was filled with an ecstasy of admiration, never realizing that beauty owes as much to the beholder as to the object admired. She was not beautiful, but there are charms more winning than mere physical beauty, which is sometimes an obstacle to success, and may be even a curse.

In addition to her other acquirements, Miss Castleton had dabbled a little in art, had studied law and thought once of studying to be a nurse. Being so well informed on so great a variety of sciences and arts, she could talk well on almost any subject from "cabbages to kings."

In her young body, glowing with health and good spirits, she united all the best charms of American girlhood, thoroughly self-poised, fearless and proud. She was one among a thousand, and yet her prototype has confounded Europe and set the worlds of London and Paris by the ears—stooping in her false pride, it is true, to barter her father's hard-earned lucre for a tarnished coronet, yet bravely holding her ground afterward, with the pride and dignity that might be the heritage of a queen.

.14

In Barcelona she was everybody's friend in a sense that can be understood only by those who have seen life in a small town.

Barcelona! She closed her eyes and recalled the scene at the station, where almost the whole town had come to see her off, the girls with flowers, the boys with candy, the ladies with sandwiches, preserves and fruit, and their husbands with newspaper. and advice. Everybody had a parting word, from the staid old Circuit Judge down to the two little darkies who serenaded her with "Arkansas Traveller" and "Mississippi Sawyer," which they played on the jews-harp and never thought of a fee. There were so many good-byes to be said, so much laughter, so many jests, that she had not dreamed of tears; but now, as she recalled her uncle's tall form, a little bent and lonely, his eyes a little moist, waving his hand as the train moved away, a lump came into her Poor old Uncle Dan, her best friend in the world! When would she see him again? Another moment and Miss Castleton would have been in tears, but she was roused by a voice just behind her, a voice with so much gentle music and quiet ecstasy in its tones that she turned to see the speaker.

The porter had removed the partition at the back of Margaret's head, and the other young lady was sitting just behind her. An elderly lady sat opposite to the strange young girl, and had engaged her in conversation, making some commonplace remark

#### CHAPTER II

#### THE BEAUTIFUL MAID OF CORINTH

The girl's beauty was Oriental, with masses of wavy ebon hair, a form of well-rounded, splendid proportions, cheeks and lips touched with nature's crimson, great languishing eyes of darkest brown, full of latent passion, with a subtle pathos in them that appealed directly to the soul. For the moment they beamed with a radiant enthusiasm which had stirred her from a habitual languor. One of Byron's beauties of the East, shorn of her animal instincts and savage nature, civilized and refined into an exquisite, innocent girlhood, she seemed.

Presently the girl moved to a seat across the aisle which the porter had just prepared for her and in passing Margaret she dropped an envelope with a letter in it. As Margaret stooped to picked it up, she saw that it had been mailed somewhere in Tennessee and was addressed to Miss Gertrude Downing, Corinth, Tennessee. As she returned the letter to its owner, their eyes met, and for the first time Margaret was struck with the tender, pathetic mystery in their depths. She also noticed a slender, shapely hand, slightly sunburned, with tapering fingers.

Here was a soul that knew not itself, that slumbered awaiting its call. Some remote ancestor looked forth reincarnated from her eyes, some houri of the East whose glorious beauty had driven men to war perhaps, for whose possession blades were drawn and blood was shed. It was a beauty that knew not nor suspected its own power. She thanked Margaret with a timid awkwardness. As she took her seat a deep blush dyed her cheek. Margaret followed the girl's glance, and saw a pair of admiring masculine eyes fixed for a moment on the strange girl's face.

"You poor, sweet, timid creature," thought she; 
you'll have to get used to that sort of thing."

By this time the train was fast leaving the foothills, and glided through level stretches of pasture lands and fallow fields where cattle stood waiting to be fed and milked, and long lanes led to houses that shone white from the distant hills. They came upon the rear of a farm-house where the workmen lined up in a row to watch the train pass, all with eyes fixed on the engine ahead. There were five, three of them black, and all armed with scythes and rakes. One of them held a whetstone poised in the air and the scythe balanced before him. Behind him a fire gleamed from a kitchen stove, and a neat, motherly old woman, who wore a checked apron, stood in the doorway. It was a simple, homely scene, a glimpse of the kindly, slow-moving Southern country life. At the sight the dark, languorous eyes filled with tears and Miss Gertrude Downing was seen to cover her face with her hand.

She, too, had left a small town in West Tennessee, and was on her way to Washington to accept a position in the Census Bureau. She had taken the examination for one of the temporary places, with the hope of obtaining a permanent one in time. For economy's sake Miss Downing had travelled in the day coach until the night before this story opens, when she had come into the same Pullman car as Margaret Castleton.

Corinth, Tennessee, is one of those strongholds of Puritanism scattered over the South, where the most rigid rules of the most orthodox religious sects hold sway. They teach that almost all popular amusements are wicked, and every year at certain times turn out of the Church various of the younger members who have danced or played cards, only to take them back again at other stated times. Gertrude Downing, or "Jetty," as she was familiarly known, had never questioned their propriety or impropriety, but accepted all the teachings of home and Church with unreasoning faith. Her grandfather had been a presiding elder, and her immediate family had long identified itself with the orthodox faith.

The ministers of Corinth loved to preach damnation to dancers, although the children, in the natural exuberance of health and life, often danced un-

rebuked before them on the green. They denounced cards because it led to gambling, but winked at other games which might easily be called games of chance, or upon which bets are often made. They were particularly vehement in their arraignment of the theatre and theatre-going, although not more than half a dozen of the whole population had ever seen the inside of a theatre. Yet these same ministers encouraged "shouting," which might be considered as undignified in a church as dancing could be at home; belonged to baseball teams, though they could not have told why a rubber ball was less wicked than a piece of pasteboard. Also when they needed money for the church or Sabbath-school, they built a stage at one end of the church edifice, placed a curtain across the front of it and gave an entertainment consisting of short dramas and musical numbers, though they would have protested had it been suggested that they were converting the church into a vaudeville theatre. With all this, they were the best people in the world—a little narrow, as becomes the elect of a provincial town, a little short-sighted, for even a small village may have its own slums, which it overlooks in its solicitude for the heathen. They were rather aggressive, as became good religious fighters, delightfully inconsistent, but, withal, good people.

From this strict religious atmosphere came Jetty Downing, the young lady with a Puritan conscience and an Oriental nature, a pagan soul reincarnated in an orthodox mind. A quiet child, she had read voluminously such volumes as came in her way, imbibing knowledge far beyond her years, with that literary taste which springs spontaneously in some minds. At fifteen she had taught a country school in the summer term, and went to school the following winter on the money thus earned. At seventeen she had gone to school in Memphis for one term and had graduated there. She had to borrow money to finish her education, but was able to pay it back sooner than she expected, because she was fortunate enough to obtain a position in the Corinth public school. It is much easier to save your salary if you can board at home. She had taught in Corinth for several years, until a chance item in a local paper led her to write to the civil service commission for application blanks, after which she took the examination, and here she was on her way to Washington.

Her mother was a widow, a helpless, dependent creature, who had been the victim of an ill-fated second marriage. There were a number of small children, and Jetty was the main dependence of the family. Much depended on her success or failure in Washington, the happiness of brothers and sisters, their career, their own success or failure—all this in addition to their very livelihood.

She had never before been outside of her native State, but the beauty of these Virginia mountains appealed to her with the home feeling of a mother State. In her quiet village home she had sprung up like a flower in the hedge, her beauty unpraised, unsung. It was considered improper for a girl to know that she was pretty.

"A girl isn't pretty after she knows it," was the village maxim, implying that beauty self-acknowledged was vanity itself. And so she had gone quietly to church each Sabbath morning, teaching a class at Sunday-school and afterwards listening patiently to denunciations of sin and threats of hell fire and damnation from the pulpit; and when church was over, perhaps some gallant almost as bashful as herself would escort her home. Not much would be said on the way, for she was always shy, and her beauty was of the kind that can strike a man dumb with admiration, unless he possessed a very ready tongue. And besides, unusual temerity is necessary to disturb one wrapped in the light of religious exaltation, whose voice, if given to speech, could not but reveal an ecstasy of spiritual life.

She did not know that she was beautiful or that her demure soul had unstirred depths that, roused, could make her almost a savage. A slumbering volcano does not know the volume or extent of its smouldering fires. In the quiet round of homely duties she had known no great love, no strong temptation. The flowers of spring bloom serenely over many an unknown gulf of hidden lava.

# The Other Side of the Story

22

Had she spent all her days at Corinth in the quiet rounds of pure, prosy, provincial life, she might never have known herself, and this story would have been untold. Perhaps, had she been more versed in the ways of the world before her advent into Washington life, had she known her own powers even, or how to govern the spell of her own marvellous beauty, her story might have been different. Forewarned is forearmed.

#### CHAPTER III

#### WASHINGTON

Somewhere between Roslyn and Jackson City, the porter pointed out to Margaret the heights of Arlington looking proudly down on the Potomac and across at the fair city in whose defence its silent population While crossing the river she first saw Washington monument, a great white finger pointing heavenward through the mist. As the train turned a curve she recognized at the end of a street just ahead of them, the dome of the Capitol and her heart bounded at the sight. The strange dark beauty across the aisle saw it also and both gazed at the splendid sight until it was shut from view by a row of buildings. Each felt that she was on the brink of a new life, and Jetty's heart fluttered with uncertain fears, but Margaret welcomed the new era with the zest in life of a strong young woman of the world.

How it ever happened she never knew, but Miss Castleton, the much travelled and self-reliant, on reaching the sidewalk and finding herself surrounded by a mob of howling cabmen, was so disconcerted thereby that she turned to fly. In turning she let fall her umbrella and was so burdened with pack-

ages that she found it impossible to pick it up again. The cabmen, taking advantage of this, surrounded her, each offering his assistance and loudly asserting the superior fitness of his own vehicle, but awaiting a signal from her before giving any aid. Margaret, unable to shake them off, dropped her bag and other things on the ground and put her fingers in her ears. Just then a pair of dark blue eyes came to the rescue; she could not hear his voice, but evidently the men did and understood it, too. He was a young man in knickerbockers and had just left his wheel at the Almost before she could get her breath, curbstone. he had collected her packages and helped her into a motor cab and before she knew it she was driving down Massachusetts Avenue, still smiling at her own discomfiture and thinking of the blue eyes whose owner she had left on the sidewalk, bowing, hat in As she drove in the direction of Pennsylvania Avenue another cab came on behind her and stopped in the neighborhood of the Capitol. tained the dark beauty from Corinth, but Margaret did not observe her, being eager to see the sights of the famous Avenue.

Pennsylvania Avenue is perhaps the broadest street in the country and is considered virtually as two streets. It is ordinarily used by the public as any other street, that is, by keeping to the right on one-half of the whole street, as in a single street. But now and then the Police Department take steps

to remind the public otherwise, and endeavor to force the people to go in four currents instead of two, reminding them that one-half of the Avenue is practically one street. On this morning policemen with bicycles were stationed at intervals to keep the four currents going properly, and Margaret's cab was ordered to keep near the curb. She was thus enabled to see some handsome shop windows, but was surprised at the absence of department stores. She learned later that the Avenue has not been for many years the main business street of the city. street one reads most about in the newspapers and consequently the old tradition as to its character still holds with the general public. It is the street of parades and reviews, and no finer view can be imagined of infantry and horse in glittering stripes and trappings than is afforded by a seat on the south side of the Treasury building on Inauguration Day. The Treasury, which seemed to shut off the Avenue ahead of her, Margaret at first took to be the White House. She looked with interest at the post-office and the District municipal buildings to her left. The original plan of the city contemplated sites for a number of Government buildings on the south side of the Avenue, but on account of the unfit condition of the strip of land bordering the canal, the plan was not The land was swampy and carried out at that time. subject to periodical inundations even after it was filled in to its present level. This strip of land be-

tween the Avenue and the Mall has long been a subject of bitter contention and many plans have been advanced, having for their object the reclamation of this blot on the fair city's escutcheon. In this part of "the island" crime pays high license and defies the law and wretchedness and gilded vice stalk boldly hand in hand in the very shadow of Washington Monument. It is still considered unsafe to cross the Mall after dark, and it has not been long since men were held up and robbed in the Smithsonian grounds as early as five o'clock in the afternoon. In that dream of the future known as Greater Washington. so admirably demonstrated on paper in the great library, a thorough renovation of this quarter is contemplated.

Margaret could see glimpses of the grounds through vistas opened by the streets on her left, and she noticed that the squares on the south side of the Avenue were devoted largely to shops over whose doors hung the insignia of three balls. She drove on south of the Treasury past the Sherman Monument and round to the front of the White House, whose classic pillars impressed her as familiarly solid, substantially graceful, like the national character. The wind was murmuring a gentle farewell to summer through the splendent trees. The whispering boughs flung gold and crimson tributes after the vanishing hours. A wealth of color glowed over the beauteous world softened by the mystic shades

of morning mist. All these beauties were distributed down long broad avenues with trees on either hand, and at intervals were plots of green in which stood statues of soldiers and statesmen impressive among the bowers. She drank in with delight the air of Jackson Place where the Ghingos blazed a way for her with their flames of golden glory and the classic elms and maples in Lafayette Park to her right rustled their leaves in a gentle autumnal sigh of welcome. Down Vermont Avenue she drove to a street in the vicinity of Thomas Circle, where she finally stopped at the residence of her cousin, the Honorable Washington Bloomer, United States Sen-She had intended to make a short stay with his family until she could find suitable lodgings, but she learned that they were still out of town. caretaker, a little old man with a wrinkled visage, offered obsequiously to take care of her packages while she looked for a room in the neighborhood.

"This street is lined with bo'din' houses," he informed her, and forth she started on an eager quest. Almost every other house on the square had a large placard in front proclaiming rooms and board, one or both, in great letters. She walked several squares before she went in to look. She did not like the idea of living in any house that bore an advertisement in its front windows announcing it as a boarding-house to all the world.

"I couldn't bear to have it staring me in the face

every time I come back to it," thought the fastidious young lady. "It would be like wearing the sign on my back."

Finally she spied a house with only a tiny card, scarcely larger than a visiting card, and going very near to the window she read written in ink the modest legend, "Rooms and Board." Here she entered and stated her errand, and was soon confronted by a massive lady of middle age, who walked in with a rather pompous air. She wore a bodice exposing a throat whose folds merged into a double chin. Her mouth was tightly closed, its corners drooping, her cold blue eyes had a far-off, calculating look.

"She is fathoming my pocket with an X ray," thought Margaret.

The parlor was so full of bric-à-brac, rugs, tabourets, ottomans, and every description of ornamental show pieces, scattered profusely on cabinets, mantels and floors, that it required some dexterity to avoid them. Margaret had just escaped knocking over a large Japanese vase when the landlady entered and greeted her coldly.

"We have no single rooms just now," she said in reply to Margaret's query, "when would you want it?"

"I want it now. I came expecting to spend the first week or so with Mrs. Washington Bloomer, who is a cousin of mine."

"You mean Mrs. Senator Bloomer?" with a perceptible change in her manner.

"Yes, but they are out of town just now and I couldn't stay alone in the house."

The stout lady's coldness began to melt. She almost smiled.

- "Are you employed?" she asked.
- "Yes, in the Treasury Department."

Now she fairly beamed.

- "Why, in that case I might let you have one of the large rooms until a single one is vacant. Would you be permanent?"
- "Yes, as long as it suits me to stay. I'm not fond of moving."
- "Come this way, dear," and she led Margaret to the second floor back.
- "The prospect of filthy lucre manipulates the wires of cordiality," thought Margaret.

An hour later Margaret, much refreshed from a bath and change of toilet, set off for the Department.

Following her landlady's instructions, she took a Fourteenth Street car and being too independent to make inquiries of the conductor, went past the Treasury building and left the car at the New Willard, one square from her destination.

#### CHAPTER IV

#### CENSUS BEAUTIES

In the meantime the herdic cab containing the young lady from Corinth followed the same direction as that taken by Margaret Castleton. Vistas of the Capitol building stood out boldly on the classic hill to her left. Miss Downing, awestruck, gazed at it alone, heedless of the varied attractions of an attractive city, vaguely conscious of many footfalls on the asphalt streets, the rumble of electric cars and the soft sound of pneumatic tires mixed with the various street cries which fell strangely on her provincial ears.

The great white dome stood out against the sky, assuming larger proportions as she drew nearer, casting the immense shadow of its magnificence over her soul. A little sigh of content escaped her as she turned into First Street near Peace Monument. She had seen it at last; one of her wildest dreams was realized.

Presently the cab drew up at a low building with a glass roof spread over a whole square, one of those unpardonable monstrosities of architecture which are occasionally perpetrated by the wisest of Governments. Dismissing the cab, she entered and asked the way to the office of the appointment clerk. In about two hours' time she was sworn in and assigned to a certain division and settled at a desk in a large room where a number of women sat busily writing with both pens and typewriting machines. Under the prevailing management, the Census office had been divided, according to sex, into various sections over which was placed a clerk in charge, called usually a division chief. She found herself surrounded by ladies of all ages, sizes and complexions. One of the traditions of the Bureau is that it always has many beautiful women employed. Recruited with fresh young material at intervals of every ten years, they come to Washington, full of young life, and interest in everything, like a bevy of high school boys and girls. Their presence is felt in every boarding house, and a perceptible change is observed in the afternoon strollers on F street after the influx of new young faces.

She listened quietly to the instructions of her chief, a kindly, genial man, quite popular with the clerks in his charge, which is an unusual circumstance. He was a veteran of the Spanish-American War and held his position through the influence of a certain Senator who was a personal friend. An ex-soldier and a gentleman, Mr. Perry was occasionally taken to task by the chief clerk for his laxity, and yet it was observed that his clerks were as regular in attendance as those of any other division and

performed more work than any other like division of the Bureau.

The timid, awkward, beautiful girl stirred his interest and awakened his sympathy strangely. Before he left her desk after explaining the details of the work, she asked him to direct her to a boarding house.

"What charming faith in human nature!" he thought. "Providence alone has guided her into safe hands," and he presented her to several ladies who sat near and referred the question to them.

One of these was a voluble little old lady who came to Jetty's side at once and began to give her all sorts of advice. She was known as the Parrot.

"You'll find it best to keep all your affairs to yourself, and to have no intimates in the office. The best way to keep out of trouble is not to talk too much. And then if I were you I wouldn't try to do too much the first day. You'll do more to-morrow, but don't work too hard; it makes it harder for the rest of us and then they'll expect you to keep it up. And above all, don't get intimate with——" she indicated with a toss of the head a peroxide blond with conspicuous cheeks, "she always nabs every new girl; she'll ask you to lend her money the very first thing, and then she'll ask you who is your influence. Who is your influence, anyway?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;I haven't any that I know of," answered the girl.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Where are you from?"

- "Tennessee."
- "How old are you?"
- "Twenty-one."

Here the Parrot spied Mr. Perry approaching and she went back to her desk. A little later, the peroxide blond came to Miss Downing's desk and asked how she liked the work.

- "I hope you don't believe anything the Parrot says," she added, "she's the biggest gossip in the division. I hope you didn't tell her your age."
  - "Yes, I did. I'm not ashamed of my age."
- "Oh," laughed the other, "you must be very young, then." "Countrified little simpleton!" she muttered as she passed on.

Jetty gazed after her almost with affection. She was of robust appearance and her heavy frame swayed gently in walking and reminded the girl strongly of one of her pets at home, known as the Calico Cow.

In about ten days' time Jetty began to feel somewhat at home in her new surroundings and made more pleasant acquaintances among her fellow clerks. She found they were all nicknamed. Herself they called the "Mummie," because she spoke so seldom.

One young girl always walked at such a rapid pace that she was known as the Limited Express. Another one, for obvious reasons, was known as Rags. This girl spent her evenings at the Night High School and Wimodaughsis, or when at home was always preparing lessons of some kind, her every effort being directed toward the acquirement of a college education. She had no time to patch and mend.

The "F. F. V." was a lady of tender years who boasted of her pedigree and exhibited a coat of arms which she claimed had come down from some illustrious ancestor. She read the society columns of the daily papers every evening and next day would dish up all the social news for the delectation of her fellow clerks, telling it as though she was on terms of intimacy with most of the fashionable set. No one was deceived by these pretensions, and as they made the poor lady happy no one ever pretended to discredit her stories.

"Miss Snapdragon" was a lady of very certain age with snappy black eyes who seemed always on the defensive. If she saw two heads together, she immediately became suspicious, and if they laughed surreptitiously she would accuse them of laughing at her.

There was, of course, a "Cold Air Fiend"; there is one or more in every division; nay, one in almost every room in every Government building in Washington. This woman took a fiendish delight in opening the window and letting the cold air blow on her neighbors. Usually she would do this just before leaving the room on some errand.

Then there was the "Daily Hint from Paris," who could talk of nothing but clothes and always

wore the latest thing in ties and ribbons and hats. She it was who always saw the weak points in the toilets of the other girls. If one of them wore a new veil, the Daily Hint would admire it, but add that the color was not becoming to its wearer. If one wore a new hat, she would say:

"Such a lovely hat! What a pity it's too large for you."

She it was who would compliment a new skirt by saying it was a great improvement on the old one. She gave many compliments, but with each one went a stab.

"The Dreamer" was a young girl who had a patent attachment to her memory and told each day her dreams of the night before. A singular feature of these dreams was that they were usually prophetic in their nature, in that she dreamed what she wished to come to pass.

Then there was the "Painted Lady," the same peroxide blond whom Jetty thought resembled the Calico Cow, and of her every one stood in awe. She was understood to be under the protection of a very influential member of Congress, and no one dared to make an enemy of her. Every one was careful to be very agreeable to the Painted Lady for reasons of state. If one criticised the administration of the Government, it was done with bated breath; if one complained of Census regulations it was done in whispers.

"Miss Sick-a-bed" was a lady who was never well, who complained daily in a gasping voice of aches and pains and palpitations, whose desk was always loaded with pills, tablets, bottles, dropping tubes and graduated glasses, who never knew what to eat. near a Christian Scientist, and to hear them wrangle was a source of delight to the younger fry. was, too, who could bring to the surface all the kindly nature of the others. The remnant of Virginia's aristocracy would forget her pedigree long enough to express sympathy, the Snapdragon would forget her last insult and dose out the drops for her. the Cold Air Fiend would shut the window, the Daily Hint would forget the latest fads discussed in the Sunday papers and talk comfort in her most soothing tones, the Christian Scientist would give her absent treatment, the Dreamer would cure her headache with a soft stroke of her gentle hand on the invalid's temples, the Parrot would forget to give her advice, Rags of the Strong Mind would hover round with softened voice, and the Painted Lady would be kindness itself.

There were times when she felt in danger of being killed with kindness. On her entrance at nine o'clock in the morning she would be greeted with "How do you feel to-day?"

Miss Sick-a-bed. I'm not at all well. I've taken cold.

Another friend (entering). How do you feel to-day?

Miss Sick-a-bed. I feel very bad.

Another. Why didn't you do as I told you and soak your feet in hot water, drink a hot lemonade and——

Another friend (enters). Good morning, Miss Sick-a-bed. How are you to-day?

Miss Sick-a-bed. I'm sick this morning. My head aches.

First friend. Here, let me bandage it for you.

Second friend. Take my smelling salts, do.

Another friend (enters). Well, how are you to-day?

Miss Sick-a-bed. Oh, I'm dead!

# CHAPTER V

#### THE LUNCH HOUR

It was fifteen minutes to twelve o'clock by the large clock that hung on the wall over the door. Signs of restlessness became apparent among the clerks. The Parrot had placed a large kettle of water on a gas heater which stood in one end of the window sill and spread her towel in the other end for a lunch cloth. Teacups and glasses appeared on each desk with a spoonful of tea in each. Also appeared sundry lunch bags and various fruits such as apples, grapes, oranges and bananas. Soon a crowd of girls collected around the Parrot's window for the hot water, and by 12 o'clock the tea was steeping while lunches were being unfolded. They ate in little companies, the younger girls for the most part flocking together.

By far the liveliest group collected at the desk of Rags the Strong Minded, as her desk was farthest removed from those of the older clerks, and they felt more at liberty there to say what they pleased.

"Go and ask the Mummie to come over here with us," said Rags to the Limited Express as she vacated her chair for the guest and improvised a seat for herself by turning her waste basket upside down. Several other chairs had been rolled up around the desk, and a drawer pulled half-way out on either side made two more seats. There was not enough room on the desk for all the things, so part of the lunch, consisting of some fruits and sandwiches, rested for the moment on the letter press near by.

As Jetty approached with the Limited Express, the Dreamer was saying in answer to a question:

"Yes, indeed! I have advice served up with the work when it comes in at nine, poured out with the hot water at noon, and pinned on with my hat at four."

The desk of the Dreamer stood very near to that of the Parrot.

- "What was the text to-day?" asked the Limited Express. "I saw her tackling Rags just now."
  - "Was it 'thou shalt not talk '?"
  - "Or how not to get married?"
  - "Or don't be intimate with anybody but me?"
- "I always want to do just what she tells me not to do," said the Daily Hint.
- "And I generally do what she tells me not to do," said Rags.
- "Didn't she tell you not to get married and stay in office?"
- "Yes, but my mind was already made up on that point. You don't catch me marrying and staying in office. If I can't resign I stay single, you hear me, don't you? Any girl who marries and stays in

office is a fool. You won't catch me making an idiot of myself like that. I won't do it!"

She emphasized her words with her fist on the desk and the cups and saucers rattled dangerously. Her vehemence surprised no one but Jetty. The girls liked nothing better than to stir up Rags and this was one of her most frequent speeches. In her excitement Rags waved her arms about and a shriek from the girls called Jetty's attention to the condition of the under part of her sleeves.

- "That's why we call her Rags," explained the Daily Hint.
- "The Parrot told me to let the men alone. The quickest way to perdition was to get married," said the Limited Express.
- "Just you wait 'til the right man comes along, dear," began the Painted Lady who came up just then. But she was interrupted by everybody shouting at once:
  - "He'll take the Limited Express, of course!"
  - "Fast service, schedule time!"
  - "All parlor cars! No change!"
- "Return ticket, good for ten days; divorce coupon attached!"
  - "Pink tip slips for a three-cent fare!"

But the Limited scattered her tormentors with scant ceremony. She threw a whisk broom, then a Rules and Regulations, then a Congressional Directory and after that a paper weight, after which she thrashed around with a towel until she was left in peace, champion of the field.

Just then Mr. Perry walked in from his room off one end of the room with his watch in his hand.

"The clock is a little slow, girls," he said.

But the girls were all hard at work. You could have heard a pin drop.

"It's very strange," murmured the Limited Express in an audible whisper as soon as the Chief had gone, "it's very strange that no matter how our noon tea talk begins, we always end with the same dear, delightful subject of marriage!"

Jetty was a little puzzled at Rag's vehemence on the subject of marriage in office until a few days later, when the latter was again launched upon a harangue which developed the fact that it was quite possible that the strong minded Rags was compelled to combat the idea in fact as well as in the abstract.

"I just tell you, girls," Rags was saying, "I don't see why some of you don't get married. You come here every day and lead this monotonous existence for hundreds of years and become old fossils in little or no time. There's one woman I know who's nothing but a bundle of dates. She knows the date of every engagement in the late war, as well as of the Civil War, not only the big battles, but every single engagement.

- "Engagement! Whose? Yours?"
- "And then I know another who's nothing but a

United States Official Postal Guide with arms and legs. She's personally acquainted with some eighty thousand post-offices, and she doesn't know much else but that. And I know another who can recite pages from the Statutes at Large and never knows what she's talking about. And I know another who knows the name and address of every army and naval officer, retired or in the service.

- "It's every woman's duty to know that."
- "And I know another who's nothing but a walking street directory of all the principal cities. If you call the name of any street, she can tell you what cities have a street of that name, and not only that, but she knows the names of all the people on that street. And I know——"
- "Will somebody please throw something at that girl?" cried the Limited Express.
- "I tell you it's so. You are a living example. You've sat here and added up columns for centuries until all you're quite sure of in this life is that two and two make four."
  - "Why don't you get married, Rags?"
  - "Oh, I wasn't talking about myself."
- "She doesn't marry because Jack isn't able yet to support a wife. He's a sundown doctor, and Rags will never marry and keep her position.
  - "A what?" asked Jetty.
- "A sundown doctor. Don't you know what that is?" added the Limited Express. "It's something

peculiar, I believe, to the District of Columbia, a doctor who practices his vocation after four o'clock, when he can leave his desk in some Government office.

Here the Daily Hint was seen to pick up a slip of paper which had been blown to the floor by the draft from the Parrot's window. She seemed interested in its perusal and was begged to read it aloud, and finally consented to do so.

"At the lunch hour," she read, "when the tea flows like Potomac water and the crunching of doughnuts and pie is heard in the land, when Rags of the Strong Mind holds forth with her silver tongue to us, her enthusiastic admirers, then we are at out best. I wish you could see us then. You would enjoy the quips, though you might not understand all the cranks. Sometimes she comes at us pretty hard, but we always steer her onto a certain favorite subject——"

"You wrote it yourself," cried Rags, snatching at the paper.

"My dear, I'm afraid you think we're a noisy set," said the voice of the Painted Lady at Jetty's elbow.

"Oh, I enjoy it," said she, just as the Chief appeared on the scene. Quiet was restored, but not before Rags had put the puzzling question:

"Who are all the cranks?"

### CHAPTER VI

LETTER FROM MISS MARGARET CASTLETON TO HER FRIEND, MISS OLIVE WINSTON OF MALVERN

October-

My Darling Ottie.—I know now how Columbus must have felt when he sailed on unknown seas for unknown worlds. My two days' journey was pleasant and full of long, long thoughts. Being my first appearance in the character of a young business woman, I began to realize my own individuality as an independent entity. I made no acquaintances on the way, but spent my time in adjusting myself to the new order of things, to the fact that Margaret Castleton is to look out for herself in future in a land of strangers.

I remember something of the scenery of the Blue Ridge: vision after vision of misty mountains crowned with the myriad hues of October; pictures of peaceful farm houses, with the smoke curling from the cheerful fires of home; sleepy hamlets with their crowds of curious idlers, standing transfixed with wonder at the huge monster ahead of us; slumbering valleys, where Nature has imitated Heaven and in her bold, free style has exhausted every means to paint the Elysian Fields.

I ate the most delicious breakfast at Gordonsville bought from a negro girl who brought a tray of fried chicken to the train. I ate one piece and it was so good that I wanted another, so I asked her for a drumstick.

"Da's de drumstick over yawnder on de Y switch," she said, indicating the Richmond special on a siding. The famous fried chicken of Gordons-ville has given a permanent name to the train once known as the "cannon ball."

I ate my drumstick and then a "crablanton," and was hesitating as to the propriety of finishing with a wing when the train moved off, and I was compelled to wait. The mountain air gives one a fearful appetite.

But I know you are much more interested in the end of my journey than the journey itself, so I must hurry on. It was past eleven o'clock when I reached the formidable building of gray stone spread out in a massive rectangle which was pointed out to me as the Treasury. I went in and asked the first man I saw without a hat, who proved to be a watchman, to direct me to the appointment clerk. He pointed to an elevator, which I entered and was whisked up several floors and told to go to the right.

The appointment clerk was a smallish man with a bored look, who kept his chair and hardly glanced up as he motioned me to a seat. Did you ever hear of such treatment? There's not a man in Barcelona

but would have jumped up briskly and placed a chair for me. When you or I entered the Barcelona bank, didn't we set all the fellows by the ears? Well, there was some fussing with the paper I had brought, and I had to wait, sitting bolt upright and feeling very much out of place while papers were prepared for somebody to sign. At last a messenger was called to show me the way to—I knew not where or what.

The dusky individual who led me down the long, dim corridor ought to have made me feel more at home perhaps, a darky is such a familiar sight, but this one belonged to a class I had never seen before. He is the sort of man whose pompous dignity enhances and glorifies a position however mean. You feel that a mere clerk is nothing by comparison. I felt that I was in the wake of some scion of an African king, for he couldn't pretend to less. Blood will always tell. He held the door open for me with courtly grace and as I entered I heard him murmur:

# "Your most obedience."

I entered a large room with one desk in the centre at which a man sat who scarcely looked up as I was announced. The click of a typewriting machine came from behind a large screen in one corner. He waved me to a chair and turned to speak to a man who seemed waiting for his ear. There were others waiting their turn in various parts of the room. He

was a busy man and looked the part. His desk was piled high with papers, and different messengers kept running in with more papers and taking others In the meantime he was granting interviews to his visitors one by one. One of them wanted a place as laborer, one woman wanted a position as charwoman, a man wanted to show him a new clip or paper fastener just patented, and left samples for distribution among the clerks in the office; these were people from the outside. There were others, evidently clerks, who wanted him to sign requisitions, to recommend leaves of absence, to examine a worn-out typewriting machine, to transmit proofs to the Public Printer; there seemed to be nothing in the line of Government business which this man's office did not embrace. No wonder I took him for the Secretary of the Treasury himself. I even addressed him as Mr. Scott, when at last my turn ar-A grim smile lit up his features, but I did not learn until afterwards that he was only the Chief Clerk. Finally I took the oath; it was not a swear oath, and after much signing of papers and filling of blanks and dispatching of messengers to and fro on incomprehensible errands, I was conducted into the room wher I now sit, a full-fledged Government The room is crowded with desks and file cases and tables and things, and at each desk sits a man or woman at work. Just at present I am the only one at work, as they have all just stopped for

luncheon. My desk is in the darkest corner farthest from the light, as the last person has the last choice. Soon after I sat down at my desk, each man arose and put on his hat and went out, and each lady unearthed a paper bag and drew forth sundry sandwiches and bananas and pieces of pie, and began to partake of their midday meal. Everybody eats late dinner here, usually about six o'clock.

Two days later:

I had to stop at one o'clock as the assistant chief came to instruct me in my new duties. Before he left he introduced me to a young lady who sits near by, and told me I might ask her any necessary questions. As I found occasion to do so more than once, we became pretty well acquainted in the course of the day. She is a slender, low-voiced, gentle creature about my own age, the perfection of neatness. I became much interested in her before the day was over; she is a creature of surprises. One never knows what she will do or say next. Fancy the softest of voices exclaiming:

"Oh, the devil! Did that button go into your waste basket?"

Are you shocked, Ottie, dear? It was the first time I had heard his Satanic Majesty addressed so familiarly by so sweet a voice, but I assure you that it is no novelty to me now.

Two days later:

I have just eaten dinner and am too tired to go

out, and it is too early to go to bed, so I will attack this letter again. You would hardly know me tonight, I feel so dignified and grave with my new burden of responsibility to Uncle Sam and the President; and besides, I have no one to whom I want to reveal my impressions of the fair city of wide streets, and so I come to you to unburden myself.

A lady clerk came to me to-day at noon and asked me how I liked Washington, how I liked my work, how old I was and who was my influence. I staved her off as best I could without committing myself to any age or opinion. I was puzzled by the last question, but have since learned what it means. Influence! It's a great word here. It used to mean nothing to me in particular, now it means life and death and devil take the hindmost. Don't be shocked, Ottie dear, it's only a quotation. Even the doors to the Department buildings are labeled "Pull."

I worked so hard the first day that they told me not to do too much at first as I would be expected to keep up the same pace, and I might find it an unwise beginning. If I couldn't keep up the same gait always they wouldn't like it. I suppose "they" meant the President and his cabinet. I was advised to stop at three hundred cases, and so I stopped when I had done that many and began on this letter; but when the assistant chief saw me writing a letter, he

came and in a low voice told me not to let anyone see me writing a private letter during office hours as it was against the rules. I asked him what I was to do then, as my work had given out. He told me not to work so fast and that I must always look busy whether I was really busy or not. I write letters in my room at home now, because if I have to keep watch all the time I write, as I must do at my desk, I forget what I want to say, and every time I hear a step it makes me jump for fear of being caught.

Ottie, they're awfully strict. We don't dare waste any time during office hours for fear of being marked down, for it seems that we are graded just as we used to be at school, and the list is hung up for everybody to see and I'm determined not to be at the bottom whatever happens. I don't understand the method of marking exactly; we are rated on ability, amiability, character, habits, adaptability, versatility, health and sociability—at least that's what they tell me.

I am disappointed because I do not use my knowledge of shorthand after all my trouble improving my speed before I took the examination. I have given in my name as a stenographer, though, and will probably have a chance to use it some time. I hope I will, as I don't like the monotony of my present desk. It is all routine work and I hate to go in a rut. I understand, also, that my chance for promotion will be much better as a stenographer, and

I don't mean to stay here always at \$720. The Treasury building has long rows of Ionic pillars around it, simple and beautiful in their massive strength. Only a Sampson could pull them down, and of course I haven't his "pull," but I mean to make my way somehow or other. Just you wait and see. In the meantime, write all the news to Your devoted friend,

Mottie.

## CHAPTER VII

#### FROM MISS CASTLETON TO MISS WINSTON OF MALVERN

November ----

Dear Little Ottie.—I met some of my fellow boarders to-night for the first time. Not being accustomed yet to the light midday meal, I have been dining early, five o'clock, but to-night I went down about half-past six and found my table full of people. Before to-night I dined alone. I sat between a beau and an old maid, at least they would call her that in Barcelona, but here every woman is as young as she acts. I had been presented to none of the people and so sat in a rather embarrassed silence, especially when I saw the beau, whose name is Mr. Singleton, looking at me out of the corner of his eye. He is a handsome blonde with curling locks and a well-waxed mustache. He dresses well and wears a showy tie, and looks fully aware of his importance as the handsomest man in the house. Mrs. Bandy, the landlady, placed me next to him at table as a special favor, I believe, and to show him my appreciation of his presence there, I turned my attention to my right-hand neighbor. One word was enough to open the flood gates of conversation and the tide came in with such continued force that shutting it off seemed

impossible. There was nothing for me to do but listen.

"How long have you been in office? Only two weeks? Where are you from? A mighty long way from home. How do you like the city? You must feel very lonely. Come in to see me some I'm on your floor, third floor back, a nice large, sunny room. Yes, it's a very pleasant room and my little Parsifal is such a treasure, I really couldn't live without him-he's the sunshine of my The other day I was going out and I didn't want him with me and I told him so. I said. 'Parsifal, you've got to stay right here in the house until I come back now. You just shan't go.' And you ought to have seen him stand right up on his hind legs and hold up his paws just so and say, ' please let me go,' with the dearest little whine you ever heard. You like dogs? You'll like Parsifal. You just couldn't help it. He has the sweetest temper when he's well. He's just got over a fit of the distemper. I rubbed him with oil and did everything I could. He has a poor appetite, though I never like to force him to eat. I did it once and he got a bone in his throat. You don't seem to have any appetite. I wonder how old this chicken was when it died? Toughest old hen I ever saw!

"That's a mighty pretty waist you have on. Did you get it ready made? I've just had a dress made with the new sleeves and a full skirt, awfully pretty goods, but it bags under the arms. I'll have to take it back. None of the dressmakers here know how to fit me. Now——"

Here an interminable dissertation on dress was averted by a noisy discussion at the other end of the table which started the current into another channel.

"Free silver! Gold! What nonsense everybody is talking nowadays! I wish some of it was free, or that they would have free rent and free board and free car fares. Then I would be interested. Free silver, indeed! I know I have to earn all I get.

"Do you walk down every morning? Too far? What office are you in? Do you know Miss Smith in your bureau—a little woman with a squint? There are a great many women there? Yes, and in all the offices; that's why they're paying less and less for salaries, they never want to pay a woman as much as a man, you know.

"How do you like Mr. Singleton?" as that gentleman left the room. "Don't you know him? I thought you had been introduced. I beg your pardon. Don't you think he's handsome? You didn't notice it? Dear me! He's a great favorite with the ladies. He's a very nice young man. I guess you'll like him when you know him. So much nicer than those young chaps over there." Here she indicated another table filled with young men who

were students at the law and medical colleges. "Some of them have the room over mine and they are the noisiest things, always sparring, wrestling, bag-punching, or something. That lady just going out? Oh, that's Mrs. Percy, Mrs. Carolyn Percy. Married? Yes, no, she's a Washington widow. She took her maiden name, Percy. I forget her husband's name now. Pretty? Yes, most people think so, but I don't. Pretty is as pretty does, I think. She's a little too gay for me. They say she's a lobbyist, too. Always has a lot of beaux round, and she knows all the Congressmen. I see she has her eye on Mr. Singleton, too. Why will men be such fools, I wonder. What did you say your name was? Miss Castleton? I'll introduce you to him tomorrow. You must draw him away from Mrs. Percy. But you like Mrs. Percy better than you do him? My goodness, child! You don't know either one of them yet. I used to know a girl who had those terrible first impressions of people." Here she closed her eyes and shook her head. "She came to no good. Better go a little slow. On Mr. Singleton? No, I mean Mrs. Percy, of course. should I mean?

"Be sure and come in to see me soon. I have a chafing dish and we have very nice times. Mr. Price cooks beautifully on the chafing dish. You don't know Mr. Price? Oh, he's my beau. It seems to me that everybody ought to know Mr.

Price. We've been friends so long. He's considerably younger than I am. We've been going together for a long time; ever since I've been in office, and that's been, let me see, twenty years. They call him my shadow."

Here a servant approached and announced a gentleman to see Miss Gable.

"That's Mr. Price now," said my new friend.
"I'll have to go. Excuse me." And she left her dessert unfinished in her eagerness to see the man who had been her shadow for twenty years. It seems to be the fashion here to stay engaged. Nobody ever gets married.

As I left the table Mrs. Bandy met me and led me into the parlor, where she introduced me to several of the ladies, including the lovely Mrs. Percy. They say no man living ever could resist her smile, and she seems to be popular with most of the ladies, too, at least the younger ones.

"I'm going to give a small party on Hallowe'en," she said to me, "and I want you to come. Don't make any engagement for that evening. Of course you know you mustn't dress up much, as we want to bob for apples and play games and pull candy. The party will be in my room, though we are to adjourn to the kitchen for the candy pulling. Don't you know where my room is? If you wait just a few minutes I shall be glad to show you the way to it."

Mrs. Bandy has two houses which communicate only on the first floor through the dining-room. Mrs. Percy has the second floor front in one, while my room is on the third floor of the other house. few minutes later Mrs. Percy showed me the way to her room and made me go in for a short visit. is a veritable little parlor. I suppose she has a folding bed somewhere, but I could discover nothing suggestive of a bedroom, unless it was a chiffonier. It seems to be the custom here to entertain callers in your room. Are you shocked, Ottie dear? You would understand it better if you could see Mrs. Percy's room. It is a nice large room; she uses screens to hide her dressing-table, and I think there is a large closet to dump things in. She has a cosy corner with plenty of big soft pillows and an Oriental The prevailing color is a dull red. has soft draperies and dull red hangings everywhere, and beautiful lace curtains. I understand that the furnishings are all her own. The room is one of the most expensive in the house. I suppose she has an income, and then they say she adds to that by lobbying; but then she has traducers, as all handsome women have. Moral, don't be beautiful. Ottie dear, if you can help it. We got along so well that my visit lasted an hour and might have been longer, but some visitors were announced for Mrs. Percy, so I came up to my nest in the "middle of the mansard," as the French say, to write you all about it. Will not send this until after the party.

Well, the party was a success. I did nothing to disgrace myself; in fact I was about the best behaved girl in the crowd, if I do say it myself. Of course, at a Hallowe'en party everyone is expected to be more or less boisterous in playing games and so on, it is only the natural exuberance of youth, you know. I observed that the Washington beau waits to be baited and hooked and is as coy as a cat-fish, that is, while people are looking on. I was quite content to be a passive observer and was much amused at the artless display of graces, fluttering of draperies, the craning and dimpling at the appearance of certain of the male guests, the petty rivalries and manœuvres. I sat on a corner of the sofa and looked on as the guests arrived. But when we adjourned to the kitchen, where the candy was to be pulled and various games to be played, I had to take part. The partners were selected by chance and I watched with interest to see who were the luckiest ones, as some of the gentlemen were much more in demand than others. Mr. Singleton seemed to be the most sought after, while none of the students were much in demand. Observing this, I began to talk to one of them, a very young and dignified lawyer in embryo whom I had met previously. After a few platitudes were exchanged, I remarked that all the young people in the house were not present.

"Oh, you mean the Carrolls and that crowd. No, they don't come to anything Mrs. Percy gives."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Why not?"

- "How long have you been in this house?" he asked.
  - "Three weeks."
- "Three whole weeks. You ought to have caugh on by this time."
- "Caught on to what?" My curiosity was piqued "Why, you see there are two cliques in the house Mrs. Percy is the recognized leader of one and Mrs Carroll heads the other."

We had no time for further conversation on this subject just then, but I have pursued my inquire since and have discovered a unique state of affairs There are two factions among the guests in the house which are distinct and impassable. It is im possible to remain neutral I am told. If you try to choose your own friends instead of having then chosen for you, and keep yourself superior to al the petty hostilities and bickerings, you will end by making enemies of both factions. They say every newcomer is seized by the throat, as it were, and impressed into the service of one or the other party They also say that I have been captured at once by Mrs. Percy's party. The Hatfield-McCoys could take lessons from the feudal system as practiced in the average District pension, one-half of its guests not on speaking terms with the other half. True the two ladies who lead the two factions have had no open quarrel, so far as I can learn, and they speak politely though coldly when they meet. The followers of the two belles content themselves with

aside remarks and innuendoes, but are also polite to each other. We have no high words in the diningroom, no mortal stabs in the parlor, no blows in the dark of the hall, none of that open warfare which I understand is no unusual thing in other houses of this kind, for the District is full of just such pensions as this.

It seems that Mrs. Carroll's husband is dead, and so she feels herself superior to Mrs. Percy, whose husband is alive, but divorced from her. Carroll seems to spend her whole existence in devising ways and means to outdo Mrs. Percy in the splendor of her gowns, in the number of her followers, the elegance of her visitors. She sees who comes and goes from Mrs. Percy's door. Nothing seems to escape her, although her room is in this house and Mrs. Percy's is in the next house, communicating with this only on the first floor. Mrs. Carroll is to give a euchre next week; she will probably try to excel the party given by Mrs. Percy. box of flowers came for Mrs. Percy Saturday evening and Mrs. Carroll received a box of Huyler's candy the following Monday. Mr. Crane, the law student, says she sent the candy herself. Mrs. Percy was invited to a box party one evening and it was not long afterwards that Mrs. Carroll went to what she called a "swell dinner." Mrs. Carroll always takes pains to let every one know about the various attentions she receives, parading her flowers and candy in the dining-room and talking about her triumphs in the parlor or anywhere in hearing of the friends of Mrs. Percy.

As I said, the Hallowe'en party was a success. I may add that I was a success, too, for Mrs. Percy told me at the close of the affair that I was the sweetest girl of the whole crowd. I showed that I really enjoyed the fun and that pleased her, I suppose. Besides, I made myself particularly agreeable to the students who had been snubbed earlier in the evening, and they one and all voted me a "dead game sport," which no doubt they meant for a great compliment. One of the girls said to me next day:

"Why in the world do you waste time on the students? They are too busy with their studies every evening to be made use of, and they never dream of such a thing as taking you out to supper or to the theatre."

That's a Washington girl for you. They don't cultivate a man unless they think it pays. You see the students are all Government clerks and go to the law school in the evenings or after office hours in the afternoon and have very little time to spare.

But I haven't finished telling about the party. As I seemed perfectly contented with the students or whomsoever chanced my way, I had made no effort to attract the lions of the evening who seemed to be busy enough without me. But this did not suit Mr. Singleton. He is the sort of man who has become so accustomed to creating a flutter among

the petticoats that he is piqued when he finds a girl that is indifferent. He sought me out finally and we had quite a chat. I learned that he is Senator Sacket's private secretary. When I left Mrs. Percy's room he offered to escort me through the dining-room to the next house, and did not notice my surprised refusal. Someone had turned out the gas in the dining-room; but then I'm never afraid in the dark. Well, he took my arm and helped me down the stairs and then we went into the dark dining-room. We had crossed the room, when he stopped and put his arm around me. It was so sudden that I was completely off my guard and hardly realized what he was doing until he kissed me on the cheek. I sprang away-we were near the sideboard-and in raising my arm I knocked off something which fell with a crash of broken glass. also struck Mr. Singleton in the face with some His nose was bruised next day. I was too angry to speak to him.

"Aren't you going to tell me good-bye?" he whispered as I sprang away and rushed upstairs. Are you very much shocked, Ottie dear? What do you think of such impudence? Not a young man in Barcelona would dream of kissing a decent girl until he had known her a day or two, or had had at least more than half an hour's conversation with her. The Washington man gets over his coyness in a surprisingly short time, no longer than it takes to reach

a dark corner. I wish I had been warned. To think that he should be the first man to kiss me, a man I do not even like. One prefers to save that privilege for "the nicest man in the world," even if he is a long time coming on the scene.

Next morning at breakfast Mr. Singleton's nose was the subject of much comment, a popular man's appearance always is, I suppose, and by the way, I wonder if I didn't discover the secret of his popularity in the dark dining-room the other night?

He took all the chaff very coolly, replying that he had run against a door in the dark.

- "Did you have trouble getting through the dining-room last night?" asked Miss Gable. "I heard a noise of breaking."
- "That must have been Mr. Singleton's nose," remarked another.
- "Who was with him? Oh, Miss Castleton! and she's still as a mouse. Tell us how it happened, Miss Castleton."

I felt my face growing hot, but managed to say:

"I didn't know I hurt him," and everybody at the table roared.

I said nothing more in explanation after that and let him fabricate what he pleased.

My letter is growing too bulky, so will close with a promise to be more interesting next time.

Lovingly yours,

Mottie.

### CHAPTER VIII

# MISS CASTLETON TO MISS WINSTON

November ----

Ottie, my dear, I have actually met him, my hero of the howling mob, my knight of the knickerbockers, my rescuer with the fine blue eyes that were the first to greet me when I arrived in Washington, and what do you think? He is the son of Senator Kendall. It was at Cabin Johns Bridge the other day. I went out with a merry party to spend the afternoon as the weather continues very fine, and after four o'clock we were joined by a number of other ladies and gentlemen, among whom appeared Truman Kendall. Our meeting was like a scene in a play. A number of us were grouped on the rocks having a picture taken when I looked up and my eyes met his as he neared the spot where we were. The recognition was mutual, but we waited to be introduced and no one knows yet that we had met before, so we have a secret to begin with. It seems that he is a friend of Mr. Singleton's, who presented him to the group and he joined us for the rest of the day. He walked beside me as we strolled along the canal and he is the most interesting man I believe I ever met. I know what you

are thinking, "Oh, I've heard you say that before," but it is really true this time. He is interesting not only because I saw at once that he meant to make love to me, but because he went about it in such an unusual way. You see, lovemaking is an art in which the average man will blunder, but Mr. Kendall is an artist in that line. Compared to Mr. Singleton's way, Mr. Kendall's method is what the Sistine Madonna is to a printed poster. In the first place he didn't begin by assuming a familiar I-musthave-known-you-in-another-existence tone; he didn't even press my hand a moment longer than was necessary in shaking it. In fact he didn't say anything that could be definitely called lovemaking, and yet his eyes, the gentle subdued tones of his voice, his deferential manner, all breathed a subtle homage. It's always easy enough to tell when a man's in love, or thinks he is, isn't it? Of course, for all I know this way of his may be habitual; he must meet many women; I understand that he is quite a social favorite, and men are scarce in the first circles of society here. Even if it is all pretense with him, it's a rather pleasant experience for me anyway. You see such infinite skill and finesse in the art of arts is worth observing, simply for its own sake.

Well, the day was glorious; it was Indian summer and the crisp autumn winds wafted to us the sweet, clean odors of the woods; the pure sunlight spread its halo serenely around us; the squirrels frolicked near; the sparrows chirped overhead, and the mild blue haze enticed us to explore farther and farther, until we realized that we were far from the rest of We had stopped under a persimmon tree the party. and were feasting on the early frost-dyed fruit when we discovered that it was time for dinner. It had been engaged at the inn for the whole party. course I didn't want to miss dinner even for this, so we hurried back to the inn, where we separated, he sitting beside Mrs. Percy at the other end from me. I was placed beside Mr. Crane, the law student. was glad to have somebody besides Mr. Kendall, as I shouldn't like for him to see how much I can eat. You know I'm always hungry these days. While I ate ravenously the student talked all sorts of soft I suppose he was a little jealous of Mr. nothings. Kendall.

If Mr. Singleton's way of making love is what a poster is to art, the student's is a newspaper cartoon. My appetite daunted not the budding lawyer. It was something like this:

- "I dreamed about you last night," as I cut a piece of chicken off the bone and put it in my mouth.
  - "I dreamed that you came to me with---"
  - "Salt, please."
  - "In a white dress with your hair flowing in-"
  - "Butter?"
  - "In the soft breeze and your sweet voice said----"

- "Another piece of chicken, please."
- "Charlie, my dear, I want-"
- "A piece of bread."
- "I want you to tell me-"
- "Why don't they give me the salad?"
- "I want you to tell me again-"
- "Please give me a glass of water."
- "I want you to tell me again——. Say, you're not listening."
- "I'm only looking for a spoon. There now, go on."
  - "Tell me again that you love me."
  - "Who's got the sugar?"
  - "Tell me again that you love me."
  - "Where is the cream?"
  - "I don't believe you've heard a word I've said."
- "Oh, yes, I have. Please may I have another piece of cake? Go on, 'tell me again.' What did I say? I was walking in my sleep and I came to you and said, 'Charlie, my dear,' what else?"
  - "Tell me again that you love me."
  - "Did you do it?"
  - "What?"
  - "Hand me that piece of pie."
  - "Say, aren't you through eating yet?"

He became silent after that, determining, I suppose, to wait until the pangs of hunger were allayed before he made any further advances.

"I hope you're not shocked at my appetite, a la

Byron," I said, missing the accompaniment of his voice.

"No, it does me good to see you eat, even if I've no appetite of my own," he said with ardor in his eye, and I had to stop eating to laugh.

After dinner—I need not add that it was a good meal and I enjoyed it-we walked to a deserted amphitheatre near by called Glen Echo and explored the place. It is one of those spots whose natural beauties are a continual source of delight: one of those Edens where Nature played hide and seek with her lovers until men came in crowds and drove them away. As we sat resting among the crags Mr. Kendall sat sketching on a piece of fungus from an old stump. On the journey home he showed me the sketch. You could never guess what it was. was I, Mottie Castleton, just as I looked that day at the station with my fingers in my ears, surrounded by a mob of shouting cabmen. Isn't it ridiculous? The sketch is now tied with ribbon and occupies an honored place on my wall.

January ——

I began this a long time ago and thought I had sent it off at once, but have just discovered it in my desk and will add more recent developments for your benefit.

All the ladies in our house received on New Years Day. We all wore evening gowns and had the curtains drawn and the gas lighted just like a matinee. I wore my old white gauze made over and nobody here was any the wiser. Each one of us had invited all the gentlemen we knew and they all came and more besides. That's the way they do here. Those who receive keep open house. We had about two hundred callers, I suppose. We had tea, chocolate and punch, nuts, salted almonds, cakes and candies. You see I always know what there is to eat.

The ladies all stand in line and the gentlemen who call pass down the line shaking hands with each lady. He is announced at the door by a footman—ours was hired for the occasion—and that seems to introduce him to everybody. Usually if the gentleman finds a lady whom he knows, which doesn't always happen, she is supposed to show him the way to the refreshment room. The punch was the most popular beverage. Are you shocked, Ottie, dear?

When Mr. Kendall came he told me he was very anxious to have a cup of coffee and would I get him some? Well, we had a quiet chat in the cosy corner and the room was so crowded that no one seemed to notice. I am as much interested as ever, although his manner has been exactly the same, always implying the most flattering consideration, but I must confess that I couldn't produce half enough evidence to use in a breach of promise suit. I suppose that's why I like him, because I'm not altogether sure of him; it's the delightful uncertainty.

He can draw well and writes sometimes for the magazines, though he is dependent on neither gift for a livelihood. He was just a little gloomy on New Years Day because, so he said, the season begins now and he will have to dance attendance at some five hundred teas, receptions, dinners and what not, all of which he told me would be stupid and tiresome.

- "I suppose we won't see you very often, then," I said.
- "Shall you care?" he inquired. "If I thought you did, I could bear it better."
  - "We shall certainly miss you," I answered.
- "I may snatch an opportunity now and then to come, if I may."

I know I blushed, for his manner indicated quite plainly that he preferred my society to the brilliant array of society belles and matrons who were to entertain him almost continuously for the next few weeks.

- "I can follow my own inclinations when Lent comes," he added. "The season closes then, and we are supposed to give up amusements for a time, but most of us put in the time by choosing our own entertainment. I shall certainly come to see you then, if I am still welcome."
- "I'm glad you don't find us dull," I said with the air of one quite accustomed to being preferred to the belles of swelldom and titled ladies of the high-

est rank, for such are the people with whom he consorts here. My heart was beating high with elation, but I was determined not to lose my head through the subtle flattery of any man of the world. No, Ottie, I'm not in love, of course, but to tell you the truth, my heart was never in such danger before.

Another week! But you see the longer I keep this letter the more I have to tell you, and I know you love long letters and perhaps you won't mind so very much.

We go to the theatre pretty often and always have a supper afterwards, sometimes at a café, oftener it is one of Mrs. Percy's Welsh rabbits or lobster à la Newburg with beer. When we sup downtown, it is usually a Dutch treat. I'm always hungry here. I often dream of peach cobblers and blackberry pies, and my fondest recollections of home, I'm sorry to say, savor of odorous real country sausage, unwatered milk and egg bread. Mrs. Bandy's house is so pleasant and attractive that we stay here in spite of the poor table. Some day I'll find a place where I can get enough to eat if I have to search the whole city. We all complain of the fare, but nobody really thinks of leaving. We would rather have a "good time," even if we have to go half starved. She gives us a dance or a card party every Are you shocked, Ottie dear? I learned to dance in New Orleans, you know. You would forget all your scruples, too, if you came here.

# The Other Side of the Story

do all sorts of things here that we wouldn't dare to do at home.

You see I must see life as it is lived if I would be a great writer as I mean to be; this, of course, is confidential. If the primrose path lead to fame, success, our heart's desire, why not tread it a while longer? Some day the wisdom of my remarks will be more apparent than now.

With oceans of love,

72

Mottie.

## CHAPTER IX

## MISS CASTLETON TO DOCTOR DAN BRADY OF BARCELONA

January ——

Darling Uncle Dan.—I am so sorry to hear that you had the grippe. I wanted awfully to come home so that I could do my share of nursing and coddling. Be sure to take good care of yourself now that you are up.

I am really gay this winter. Have been with Mrs. Percy to some of the official receptions where crowds of well-dressed women elbowed each other and screamed at one another at such a rate that my head reeled and I was glad to get away. Then we went to a card reception one afternoon, which means that we had an invitation, and the crowd was not quite so great, but the voices were just as high pitched and everybody tried to talk louder than everybody else and to make you feel as small as possible. But the five o'clock teas are the worst. You are introduced to a lot of strangers at each place you go, but you never get acquainted with anybody.

Cousin Mary Bloomer has invited me to assist her in receiving at her next five o'clock tea. She was much amused at my description of the receptions I had attended and tells me that I haven't yet been

initiated. Well, perhaps she is right. I hope they do have a chance to really enjoy themselves sometimes.

Yes, I have been to church and I go once every Sunday and everyone thinks me a model of goodness, and I suppose I am, for I'm the only one at our house who goes to church at all, excepting the Catholics, who get up early and go. I could never be a good Catholic. If I were one they would have to add a falling from grace amendment to their confession of faith, for I can't get up early Sunday morning. They must be the best people in the world.

Yes, I've been to Sunday-school, too, and joined a class of twenty-five young ladies, and they put me on a committee and wanted to elect me as see but as I knew nothing about the duties tion, I managed to side-track the resultant appointed on the relief committee piect is to aid the poor, and ar when he learns how to go about

Yes, I have some winter until the weather turned them off again.

No, none of the my State have comy place to etiquette, a No, I've had no proposals of any importance as yet, though some of the fellows are too spoony for anything. They all make love on first sight. They try to kiss you before they know what your name is. One of the students asked me to be engaged to him only a few minutes after we were introduced. They say it is a weakness of his; he tries it on every newcomer, but so far it hasn't fetched anybody. You see the students are all in office and go to the law and medical schools at night, and don't have much spare time and they try to make good use of what time they do have.

Yes, I've made some friends and I don't get homesick now. My friends are in two classes, office friends and those at the house, for I seem to live in two worlds. Mrs. Percy is going to take me to the Chinese ball. She is a great friend of the Chinese Minister's. She and Mr. Singleton have been with me to see some of the sights of the town, Arlington and Mt. Vernon. We also went one day to Cabin Johns Bridge where the dinner dollar, and was ne time.

meant to do as r, and as this is t see it until the

very much shocked It would save car

# The Other Side of the Story

76

Give my love to all the dear people and reserve a generous share for yourself from your very loving Mottie.

P.S.—I wish I had some home-made bread and butter and blackberry jam, or a sliced sweet potato pie. I could eat a whole half-dozen.

M.

P.S.—I open this before mailing to tell you that I've just been promoted to nine hundred dollars a year. Aren't you proud of me now?

With oceans of love, not only for yourself but for every cat and dog in Barcelona, I am ever and always you own loving

Mottie.

## CHAPTER X

### MISS CASTLETON TO MISS WINSTON

January ——

Dear Little Ottie.—I have seen the President, have shaken his hand, have looked on his face and still live. I went to the Diplomatic reception with Mr. and Mrs. Bloomer the other evening. The line of carriages was about a mile long when we got there and we had to go way round to Seventeenth Street to get in line and we waited for two hours in the cold, but what matter, we saw him. It gave me a cold, but I feel fully repaid even then. Both President and Mrs. Marshall had a pleasant greeting for all, though I don't see how they could stand there so long and not be exhausted.

His Excellency, the Honorable Whitney Marshall, twenty-ninth President of the United States, whilom Governor of Oregon, is taller than I thought from his pictures, ruddy of complexion, cordial in manner, a hearty, beaming Westerner who shakes your hand as though he meant it, a thoroughly honest man, I do believe. A young man for a President; his large, firm mouth shows a will of iron and his deep set eyes display marvellous sagacity. No chance for the political chicaner here; those keen

eyes of his can search out all petty duplicity, and go straight to the core of things, detecting all fraud and sparing no pains to grasp the truth. When he grasped my hand and I looked into those keen, honest eyes, I felt a thrill of pride in the safety of our beloved country. You know I'm no politician. The man's the thing, say I, Democrat or Republican, and as long as we have such men as he in public life, our prosperity is assured. Thank God for an honest man!

As for Mrs. Marshall, she is adorable. She makes you feel proud of your country and the one cordial glance she gives you as you press her hand and pass on kindles all your latent admiration for American A young woman with comparatively womanhood. no experience, called to preside over the first mansion in the land, she took up her new duties with a rare grace and ease and acquitted herself with such tactful amiability as to win all hearts. Her manner is never patronizing or condescending, which is the fashion among most of the prominent hostesses of society here, who seem to delight in impressing you with their own importance. On the contrary, Mrs. Marshall gives the impression that it is you who confer a favor. How she can stand there for hours and go through with it all with a kind smile and a glad hand for each one is a perpetual wonder. she does not patronize, neither is her manner ever the least bit servile. I saw her welcoming the daughter of an emperor, a Russian princess who is visiting here not as a public character, but incognito, and Mrs. Marshall's air of quiet elegance and dignity left nothing to be desired. Hers was inborn greatness, which is better than all the royal blood in Europe.

Cousin Mary presented me to a number of notables, but I hardly noticed them, I was so interested in the great attraction of the evening, our hostess herself.

The crowd was something dreadful. The press was so great in the corridor that Cousin Mary almost fainted and Senator Bloomer lifted her up above the crowd and placed her on the radiator where she could breathe. Fortunately the heat was turned off. My gauze dress was ruined. I had caught a terrible cold while waiting outside in the carriage and afterwards, but I went home happy nevertheless. I had seen a real queen. True, her only crown is the love of the people, but I am sure she desires none better.

I can't say that I care much for official society, but I did enjoy the Chinese ball; it was such a novelty. Mrs. Percy is a great friend of the Chinese Minister's, and we had invitations which, if report be true, cannot be said of all the people who were there.

I wore a gown of pale blue chiffon over what was supposed to be silk; but nobody knew the difference, and it was made by your distinguished friend, Mottie Castleton. We received a fair share of attention—there are always plenty of men around Mrs. Percy,

anyway; she knows everybody and everybody likes her, too. You ought to have seen me dancing with a Chinaman! I felt as though I was holding on to an animated silk shawl.

As we danced I happened to glance over my shoulder, and whom do you suppose I saw? Mr. Kendall dancing with a fairy in a white spangled gown. My heart sank and I wondered how I could ever have been so foolish as to think I could rival so beautiful a creature as she. Afterwards we walked through the conservatory, my Chinese partner and I, and we talked of indifferent things. He is a fluent and polished conversationalist; they are all born diplomats, I've heard, but I could hardly keep my mind on what he said after what I had seen. Suddenly we came upon Mr. Kendall alone and his voice was saying:

"I was just looking for you, Miss Castleton. I heard you were here. It's been ages since I saw you."

Ottie, I must have been under the spell for that evening at least, for his voice was simply music. I had not seen him since New Years Day and had almost driven him from my mind when I discovered his presence in the ballroom; and when he sought me out with the same gleam in his eyes as before, my heart responded: I know my eyes must have answered back. And when, later, we glided in unison with the music of a dreamy, sighing, languishing waltz, I gave myself up to the bewitchment and for

a few hours of my life I was really and actually in love. If he had said the things that night which he has said to me since, I couldn't answer for the consequences. If a man knows when to take advantage of a woman's weak moments, his success is easy. he waits until reason holds the reins again and prudence asserts herself, the road is more difficult. And I'm not sure that he wouldn't have said them then and there had there been opportunity, for the things he looked were enough to send little thrills chasing one another through and through my heart. But of course it was out of the question then. He was too much in demand. With a good-bye whose formality concealed its tenderness from everyone but myself, he left me after arranging to see me in a week.

Well, he came to take me out in an automobile a a few days later, but by that time I was myself again, while he was just where he had left off at the ball. I must have been very tantalizing, for he told me I was capricious and had no heart. I told him he did not know me.

"Do you know yourself?" he asked, and added in a lower tone, "My little Southern beauty."

Isn't love blind, Ottie, dear?

"I wish I did," I answered. "I would like to be wise."

- "Let me tell you how to be wise."
- "How?" I asked unwarily.
- "By being my wife. Marry me to-day, to-night,

now. I can soon get a license. We can have a secret marriage now and when Lent comes we can go off somewhere for our honeymoon. Say yes, my love."

A thunderbolt would have surprised me no less. He was not the same man I had met a few months ago at Cabin Johns Bridge. He had changed his method; or, rather, he had lost all method, and had sunk to simple persuasion. An adept in the art of arts, he could employ more common methods when the finer touches failed to accomplish his object.

I knew not what to say in reply. Fortunately we were in the quietest part of Rock Creek Park by this time and there was no one near enough to observe anything unusual in our behavior.

- "Mr. Kendall," I assumed as frigid a tone as I could, "what do you mean by suggesting a secret marriage? There ought to be some very strong reason for such a thing, or else——"
- "There is a strong reason. My father would never consent to such a thing. He has other designs for me. He wants me to marry a girl I do not love, for mercenary reasons alone."
  - "I thought your father was wealthy."
- "So everyone thinks. That's the trouble. He used up most of his fortune in the last campaign and now he hopes for me to retrieve it for him."
  - "What a pity."
- "Yes, but you can console me for everything. Won't you make me happy?"

I won't repeat everything he said, even to you, Ottie, dear, and I hardly think it would be very interesting to another person. I reasoned with him calmly and preached caution. I did my best not to forever mar the hopes of the Honorable Geoffry Kendall, United States Senator. Of course Truman thought I was cruel, but finally agreed to put off the fatal step. He tried to make me promise, but the idea of a secret marriage was so entirely new to me and so different from anything I had ever contemplated, that I simply would not consider it. I was strongly tempted to yield once, it all sounded so romantic, and would have made such a stir in the newspapers, but I did not, and your friend, your distinguished friend, remained firm and was proof against all the wiles of the most winning and fascinating man of the world in the city of Washington.

That was ten days ago and I did not see him again until last night, when he called. He came rather late, just from a dinner at the German Ambassador's and was shown up to Mrs. Percy's room, where a game of cards was in progress. He joined us in the game; it was a six-handed euchre, and afterwards assisted at a chafing dish supper; that is, he helped (?) me cut up the cheese while the others did the rest. We had no chance to renew our last conversation, but once he whispered:

"I'm trying to exist until Lent."

We spent a merry evening and it was late when he went away. Oh, these merry evenings! We have a great many of them. It is all very delightful. I am lucky to have such pleasant friends, am Our crowd is always jolly and good-natured, except, of course, when Mrs. Carroll's crowd say or do something disagreeable and stir us up a little. I do not spend all my evenings in Mrs. Percy's room, though. Sometimes they play a game which I have never had the courage to learn; a game which never seems to come to an end and takes them far into the night; a game of "cold feet," "pat hands," and a jack pot which they show down; a game of which no doubt you have heard. Are you shocked, Ottie, dear? When they play poker I spend the evening in my own room writing to you or sewing or reading. or now and then trying to begin the story with which I mean to startle the world some day. One must draw the line somewhere and I have drawn it at poker. It is too expensive an amusement. Percy is clever as well as handsome and often entertains some of the prominent politicians in her informal way. I suppose they enjoy going out where they can relax and really enjoy themselves, and they love to eat as well as anybody.

Dear Ottie, it will soon be Lent. Good-bye!

Mottie.

P.S.—I have been promoted to a thousand dollars a year and detailed to another bureau where I do stenography.

## CHAPTER XI

#### MISS CASTLETON IN SOCIETY

"Thursdays from five to seven," read the cards of Mrs. Washington Bloomer, but for this last Thursday in January special cards had been sent out, and a number of young ladies invited to assist her in receiving. One of these was Margaret Castleton who, in a new gown of soft, pale blue material garnished with lace, stood at the end of the line with the poise of manner characteristic of her in surroundings the most novel and unaccustomed. No one could have guessed it to be her first winter in Washington society, she appeared so perfectly at home. Bloomer, arrayed in white silk which clung in graceful folds about her slender figure, had been busy looking after some minor details at the last moment and the young ladies were left pretty much to themselves until the bell announced that the guests had begun to arrive.

"I want you to stand last in the line so you can leave it easier to go to the refreshment room if they need you," she said to Margaret, as she placed her next to a young lady with abundant blond locks massed upon her forehead. This young lady was in

close conversation with the girl on her right, but stopped long enough to acknowledge the introduction to Margaret, and then turned to finish her remark to her friend. They were discussing the latest cotillion. Presently she turned to Margaret and said:

"I didn't catch your name just now."

Margaret told her name, and the young lady presented her cousin, Miss Sidney, who was visiting her.

- "I am Miss Brooks, daughter of Representative Brooks," added the girl.
  - "I am Mrs. Bloomer's cousin."
- "I would so much rather stand in the receiving line than to pour tea, wouldn't you?"
- "Oh, yes," replied Margaret, who had never before done either.
- "She says they usually put their poor relations off in corners to pour tea," giggled Miss Sidney.
- "I poured tea the other day at Senator Black's, but then I asked for the privilege because I was very tired and wanted to sit down," said her cousin. Both girls observed Margaret as narrowly as politeness would permit. They noticed the absolute correctness of her appearance, her dress, her hair, her ornaments, or lack of them, her hands and fingers, even the dainty French slippers that peeped out from under the lace skirt. These trifling details in their own toilets rather suffered by comparison. There are so many things to think of when one is

in society and there is so little time between breakfast and afternoon teas. One's feet and hands cannot always be the perfection of neatness, and in such
a crowd who will notice? So the two cousins kept
their feet carefully hidden under their skirts and
held their fingers so that the nails were more or less
concealed. They never suspected that the young
lady at the end of the line had never assisted at an
official reception before or that the occasion was an
event in her life. They even strove to imitate her
unconscious ease, and were surprised when they inquired of Margaret how many seasons had she spent
in Washington, to hear her reply:

- "This is my first winter here."
- "Oh, is it?"
- "I never would have guessed it!"
- "It's my first winter, too," said Miss Sidney confidentially. "I'm visiting my cousin. She's been here two years, but she hasn't learned as much in that time as you have in one."

Margaret smiled her appreciation.

Further conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the guests, who came like a flock of birds, smiling and twittering down the line. Soon the rooms were filled and it was difficult to move about. The voices became more and more shrill and the scene was in effect a repetition of the other receptions which Margaret had attended, save that now she appeared as one of the receiving party instead of

a mere spectator. The high-pitched voices always gave her a frantic desire to put her fingers in her ears, as she had done the day she was annoyed by the shouting cabmen.

Margaret left the line first to go with a neat little old lady who wanted a cup of tea. She took quite a fancy to Margaret and when they reached the dining-room, which was more quiet, she said:

- "What is your name, dear! I couldn't hear it just now in that pandemonium."
  - "Margaret Castleton."
- "Castleton! Castleton!" said the old lady as she stirred her tea. "I wonder if you're the girl my brother has been writing to me about. Did you ever visit in Chicago?"
  - " Yes."
- "Well, he wants me to know some girl here whom he admires very much. She's here in one of the departments and she must be a perfect paragon from what he says. I wonder——"
  - "How long has she been here?" asked Margaret.
  - "I don't know."
- "You might find her name in the Blue Book if she's been here as long as two years."
  - "It can't be that you-"
- "I hope you can find her," interrupted Margaret again. Not for worlds would she have acknowledged just then that she was one of those office girls. She managed to change the subject and entertained

the old lady in her most vivacious manner so that she was quite pleased, and before leaving, handed her card to Margaret and urged her to call.

"I am an old woman, but I love young people and I like you. Now you will come, won't you?"

After she had gone, Margaret looked at the card and recognized the name as that of the wife of one of the Justices of the Supreme Court.

"Why didn't I ask her the name of her brother in Chicago? One can think of nothing in this noise," thought Margaret, as she went back to her place in the line, and held out her hand to be grasped by an endless procession of hands in white kid gloves. Women predominated among the guests. Now and then a man would appear and go through his best paces down the line, forcing a society smile and looking rather uncomfortable the while, the presence of so many petticoats probably making him feel his slight importance as a factor in society. Only two gentlemen present bore themselves with absolute equanimity, and they wore uniforms of the army. The training of a lifetime had long prepared them to bear themselves with ease, even in the greatest danger, and had taught them besides the arts of defence under all circumstances.

But presently there appeared one who bore the palm, whose presence was the sensation of the afternoon, whose voice created a general flutter of excitement, whose approach was heralded by much craning of pretty necks, much rustling of soft lace, and a momentary lull in the babel of confusion. He came down the line with a courtly bow and a winning smile and a compliment for each lady in turn, calling each name correctly. His well-waxed mustache curved upward gracefully at each end and as he smiled, a row of handsome teeth were revealed. His nose was rather large, his hair black and curling, and he spoke with a Gallic accent.

- "It is Monsieur de Barnot!" exclaimed Miss Brooks, tiptoeing in her delight.
  - "And who is he?" asked Miss Sidney.
- "Secretary of the French Legation. Oh, Monsieur de Barnot, commez vous portez-vous aujourd'hui?"

He stood bowing before the three girls at the end of the line, with his heels together and his left hand on his heart. He fairly beamed on hearing the familiar greeting, and replied to her with the most perfect accent, speaking rapidly in the French manner:

"Bon jour, mademoiselle! Je suis heureux de vous voir ce soir, et votre cousine aussi. Oh, ces belles Americaines ravissantes!"

Miss Brooks, whose knowledge of French was confined solely to the phrase she had used, stood embarrassed, not understanding a word of his reply, and blushingly tried to think of something else to say. But before she could say a word, to her astonishment

she heard a voice at her left replying to him in his own language with apparent ease and with the thorough composure which had characterized Margaret's conduct the whole afternoon. Monsieur de Barnot seemed delighted at her remark, whatever it was, and a very animated conversation ensued, much to Miss Brooks's disgust. Before she could interfere, Margaret had actually walked off with him right before her eyes. Who was this girl whom no one had ever heard of before to-day?

"The bold thing!" she muttered to her cousin, in a half humorous, half malicious vein.

A quarter of an hour later Monsieur de Barnot made his way toward the door, slowly, because he had to answer a challenge at every step, a smile from the coy debutante, a meaning glance from the belle of three seasons, a light tap of a matron's fan. He managed at last to reach Mrs. Bloomer's side and murmur:

- "I am charmed with your cousin, Mees, Mees-"
- "Castleton?" beamed Mrs. Bloomer.
- "Yes, that ees eet—Miss' Castleton. I—I have your permission to call?"
- "Certainly you have. But you had better ask Margaret herself about it. She is mistress of her own affairs."
- "He is a man who is charmed with every new face," Miss Brooks was saying as Margaret returned. "He is a fickle little idiot."

At this moment Margaret observed a young lady approaching whom she recognized as the one she had seen dancing with Truman Kendall at the Chinese It was the young heiress whom his father wished him to marry, her rival, her beautiful rival. The girl was fair, slender, and was elegantly dressed in amethyst velvet with handsome lace trimmings. Her face, under the influence of animated thought, bore an irresistible charm. Her bearing was redolent of the subtle fascination of a sympathetic nature. Accustomed to adulation from a child, she had early learned to doubt the motives which are the mainsprings of action, and she inwardly mocked at all who sought to win her favor by fawning or cringing. She was known as a flirt because she had never trusted any man further than the claims of ordinary friendship allow.

Margaret was unprepared for her greeting.

"You're the girl I've wanted to see ever since the Chinese ball. I wanted to meet the young lady who so bewitched my friend Mr. Sin Ling that I haven't laid eyes on him since."

Here was another surprise for Miss Brook and her pretty cousin! They had not dreamed that Miss Castleton was such a friend of Miss Slattery's the heiress!

"What office are you in?" asked Miss Slattery as they wended their way to the dining-room. Margaret looked around to see if any one had heard.

"In the Treasury," she said in a very low tone,

wondering how Miss Slattery knew anything about it and why she cared.

"How I envy you," said the heiress. "You have to consider nothing but your own taste, and are independent of all conventional nonsense. Now I never know what, whom, or how much to believe. I've had many lovers, or would-be lovers, but I have never brought myself to believe in one of them, and I'm fast becoming a cynic. I wish I were earning my living as you do."

Here Margaret could not help nudging the arm of the heiress. What if these fashionable people should hear that she was an office girl?

- "Now when a man makes love to you, you can put some faith in what he says; you have some reason for believing him, while I——"
- "I beg your pardon," returned Margaret. "I couldn't possibly believe everything these Washington gentlemen tell me, or others for that matter. Only a very unsophisticated girl could do that. They will flatter a poor girl as well as a rich one, but with a less serious object: they would marry the rich girl, while they only try to amuse themselves with girls in my position."
  - "Do you have many flirtations in the office?"
  - " S-s-s-h!"
- "Why! are you ashamed of being in office?" asked the heiress, lowering her voice.

By this time they had reached a curtained alcove

and as Miss Slattery sipped her tea, Margaret replied:

"I'm not ashamed of it; that is to say, I'm not ashamed of it except under certain circumstances and in conditions like this"—she looked around over the well-dressed throng. "Now, at my home it makes no difference what work one does, or how hard one works; if we come of good family, everything is all right. We are plain people, but rather proud of our families. Of course it is vulgar to parade one's family prestige, for after all we are judged by ourselves alone, and no family is so great that its members are too good to work. The South has been reconstructed in more ways than one since the war. Every man in the four hundred of Barcelona has some occupation, and many of its leading society ladies are earning their own living."

"How charming," muttered the heiress, sipping her tea. "Tell me some more about your delightful Barcelona."

"I have seen many a ragged, unkempt, barefoot boy, his family impoverished ever since reconstruction times, selling fruit and vegetables from door to door and no one thought any less of him, but respected him the more. Why, the belle of the town was a clerk in her father's grocery store; and one of the greatest beauties of the country and one of the nicest girls there used to come into town sitting on top of a wagon-load of cotton bales. Did anyone think any less of her for that? No, we girls ran

out to the gate to see her go by and all the town beaux were there to help her off when the wagon stopped in the public square.

"What Arcadian simplicity!" laughed Miss Slattery. "That must be the ideal life after all, that sort of thing. One can have real friends and trust them without suspicion." A slight pause ensued.

"I would like to ask you something," she added presently. "Do you believe in love?"

"Why not?" asked the astute Margaret. "I can't say that I have any special reason for believing in it, but—oh, well, one always believes in love, somehow or other."

"Love! I hate the very word sometimes! It is a contagious disease that is soon over and never kills. It is an artistic fiction to adorn a novel or form a motive for a play. It is a dream of the unreal, a fancy of the flippant mind, a product of an excited imagination, that is all!" The heiress spoke in subdued, earnest tones. It was a strange remark from such a source and in such surroundings.

"And yet the disease seems very real while it lasts. We must all have it some time," rejoined Miss Castleton with assumed nonchalance.

There was a moment's pause. Both girls were thinking of Truman Kendall, but neither dreamed of mentioning his name just then.

"I want you to come to see me," said Miss Slattery as she rose to go. I would like to show you that there is at least one genuine person in Washington who thinks pretty much as they do in Barcelona and likes you for yourself alone, not on account of your family and in spite," here she lowered her voice in deference to Margaret's scruples, "and in spite of the fact that you are employed."

"I shall be delighted to know you better," replied Margaret, ever equal to the occasion, though she palpitated with pleased surprise.

"I know now why Truman was fascinated," thought Miss Slattery as she went away.

"I can't understand Truman's hesitating between us," thought Margaret. "In her place I might not stoop to be so kind to a hated rival."

She did not know the eagerness with which the heiress had recognized her, nor why she had deliberately sought to make a friend of Margaret. It was long before she understood it fully.

"Cousin Mottie," said Mrs. Bloomer after the guests had gone, "you were quite a success. You must assist me every Thursday after this."

"Oh, I'm afraid there's a conspiracy to turn my head, and you are a party to it," said Margaret as she kissed her cousin gratefully.

Luckily all Mrs. Bloomer's children were too young for the social strain and she was glad to take Margaret under her wing as soon as she found how much her natural gift of pleasing could be of aid.

It was a gay winter for Margaret. Her attendance at Mrs. Bloomer's receptions became one of her regular social duties. The gay world who flitted to

and fro and gave her a light shake of the hand in passing grew to accept her as a matter of course at Mrs. Bloomer's house. Other matrons who had no daughters occasionally asked her to assist them. Visiting young ladies are very numerous in Washington during the season, some with great wealth, some with great beauty, but few with the other charms of Miss Castleton. Never self-assertive, she pleased all who paused long enough near her, and that was triumph enough for a simple girl with no money or social status of her own. The only real friends she made among the fashionable folk were Miss Slattery, who asked her to a dinner dance before the season closed, and Mrs. Jones, the wife of the Judge of the Supreme Court, who, by the way, did not call herself a fashionable, and invited Margaret to drop in to dinner at any time and make herself at home. Monsieur de Barnot found time to entertain her and Mrs. Percy at a theatre party once during the season, but he was such a butterfly among the ladies that no one was ever sure of his fidelity, and she never counted him as one of her real friends.

Besides her friends in the smart set, and their entertainment, there were the monthly dances at Mrs. Bandy's boarding-house where there were always partners in plenty, and at Mrs. Percy's boudoir at homes there were always more men than women. On the whole she cared less for the smart social functions. It was better to really enjoy oneself

in a quieter, less pretentious way, where the presence of the opposite sex added interest and variety. It was rather monotonous to talk to women alone all the time.

Mrs. Bloomer began to look on Margaret's presence at her teas as a matter of course. She made herself so indispensable that Mrs. Bloomer wondered how she had ever done without her. A girl so unselfish, so useful and so ready was no less than a treasure.

"I must have you in the house with me next winter, Cousin Mottie," she assured Margaret.

At one of these at homes Margaret felt her powers taxed to the utmost. There strayed in among the shrieking fashionables one day a man who looked so dismayed and thoroughly out of place that a momentary hush fell on the assembly at sight of him. He greeted Mrs. Bloomer with a voice like a trumpet and then went on shaking hands as the people ahead of him were doing, and every woman in the line winced at his cordial grasp.

"The new representative from Idaho," was the whisper which preceded him.

His frame was gigantic enough to match his voice, his hands and feet were in his way and his whole bearing so awkward and ill at ease that Margaret's sympathy went out to him at once.

"Is this all of you?" he asked with a gasp of relief as he shook her hand and a suppressed titter went round.

- "I didn't catch your name."
- " Miss Castleton."
- "My name is Browning, Asbury Browning."
- "You're the new member?"
- "Now how did you guess that? A new Congressman don't amount to a row of pins here. But of course you could spot me at once as a wild and woolly Western hoosier."
  - "Are you related to Robert Browning?"
  - "I don't know. What State is he from?"

Margaret suggested refreshments and every eye followed them as they left the room.

"I didn't know whether to wear a dress suit or not, but they say when in doubt trump, and so I've trumped."

His voice sounded above all the high-pitched falsettoes like a clarion and Margaret felt that they were the cynosure of all eyes as she handed him a cup of tea.

- "I don't mind telling you," he said, lowering his voice, "that I feel like a fool in these clothes. I never wore a dress suit before."
- "I never would have known it. It fits you very well."
  - "Yes, too soon, if anything."
  - "How do you like Washington?"
- "I think it's the most beautiful city I ever meter—that is, the most beautiful girl I ever saw."
- "I suppose it's your first visit here. It's so far from your home."

- "You're right. This is my first visit here and it may be my last unless my constituents like the way I act."
- "I travelled through the West once. It's a beautiful part of the world."
- "Now you're talking, Madam. Horace Greeley hit the nail on the head when he called it the land of opportunity. It is a land richer in precious metals than in song or story, where the rugged mountains overtop those which blossom with verdure, the land where the sunsets are crowned with a glory that——"

For a moment the Hon. Asbury Browning forgot himself in his pardonable enthusiasm over his beloved West. With head thrown back, chest expanded, waving his left hand, in which he held a teaspoon, he glanced proudly round with the deliberate manner of a speaker at home with his subject. But as he paused for a suitable word, he noticed the rapt attention of the fashionable throng and the astonished silence that fell upon them at the sound of his oratory and he suddenly lost his composure, stammered, blushed like a great schoolboy and finished the sentence so auspiciously begun, thus—

- "That—that—cannot be beat."
- "I'm sure your constituents will be pleased with your eloquence," said Margaret, endeavoring to allay his confusion.
- "Eloquence is easy, Madam, when there is so much to inspire me."

Here a piping voice came to Margaret's relief.

"Then let us know when you are to make your first speech in Congress and we will all come to inspire you."

Then a group gathered round him. He was uncouth and awkward, but he could turn a compliment gracefully, and above all he was a man, a thing to be prized for its own sake at an afternoon tea, to be petted and made much of. Margaret saw him no more until the last group was leaving, when he came to her and said as he brushed his silk hat with his sleeve:

- "Why didn't you tell me when to go? I've stayed too long, I know, but I couldn't get away any sooner. I don't know how to break away, I guess. You see, this is my first dash into society."
  - "Well, how do you like it?"
  - "Do you want me to tell you the truth?"
  - "Certainly."
- "Well—oh, I can't do that. You see, I know I'm like an elephant in a china shop and pink teas are not in my line, but I had promised Mrs. Bloomer and I had to keep my word. I guess I'm a sort of a coward. But I'm glad I came, this one time."
  - "Then I'm afraid you're not coming again."
- "Well, no, but I would like very much to call some evening to see you. I can talk to one woman at a time, but hang me if I can stand it when it comes to fifty at once."

## CHAPTER XII

### LOVE AND WAGNER

Margaret saw little more of Truman Kendall during the season in spite of his protestations, and she began to suspect that his ardor was not the enduring kind. True, he had told her that his time would be well occupied until Lent, but she had expected him at Mrs. Bloomer's Thursday at homes. Why was it that all men avoided such affairs as far as they possibly could?

The piece of fungus with his drawing of herself made on the day at Cabin Johns Bridge, representing her appearance on their first meeting with her fingers in her ears, a mob of cabmen shouting round her, still occupied a conspicuous place on her wall. In addition to this, he had sent her the manuscript of a song of his own composition which had been set to music and was now on the market and she had heard that it bid fair to be a success. The name of the song was "My Only Heaven is in Thine Eyes," and breathed such fervent devotion that Margaret felt that it ought to complement his declarations to her in the same strain, and also make amends for his absence, but since her meeting with Miss Slattery she had vague misgivings. She had danced with him again at Miss Slattery's dinner dance, but in her

rival's house neither of them had dared to meet on any terms but those of conventional friendship. A mutual attraction drew her to Miss Slattery, and their imminent intimacy or friendship was enough to set Kendall to reflecting on his conduct toward the It was a fine stroke of policy in the heiress to make overtures of friendship to Margaret, for it made the young man realize the danger of a double Fortunately for him the wide difference in social station of the two girls, their diverging interests, Margaret with her office work that must come first in her daily round of duties, and Pauline Slattery with her multitudinous social obligations, would prevent for the time that intimacy which would have brought disaster to his social career. Nevertheless he scented danger and became wary. If Mar garet should betray him to Pauline, or if Pauline should tell Margaret half the soft nothings he had used in his suit for her hand, it would put him in an extremely awkward position. He would no doubt be equal to the occasion; he knew women if any man did, but he dreaded such a denouement. Women were always so uncertain, one must be prepared for the worst.

"Every time I see those two together it sends cold chills up and down my vertebrae," he confided to Singleton.

He was compelled to pause for the moment in his primrose path of dalliance.

One evening near the close of the season Margaret saw him in a box at the opera. It was one of those

rare and brief seasons of grand opera which occasionally gives Washington society a chance to display its brilliancy and elegance, to disport itself in its most magnificent array, sometimes rivalling the trappings of the stage pageantry. She was with Mrs. Percy and Mr. Singleton in the orchestra chairs where they could see the boxes at their best. In one of these she discovered Truman Kendall and at his side Pauline Slattery. There were other people in the party, but these two were all she saw. They were both totally unconscious of her presence there, and she watched them furtively with a strange little pang. She had never known jealousy, but she came near to being jealous that night. She could not detect anything in his manner to indicate any unusual interest in his companion, and as for Pauline, she was evidently in one of her vivacious moods and seemed to be the life of the party. Margaret recalled her definition of love and breathed a little sigh of relief as she turned her attention to her programme.

The opera was "Die Walkure" and she was soon rapt in the subtle tremulous suggestion of awakening souls in the Spring Song. After the first act she glanced furtively toward the two again. They were talking to other members of the party and seemed hardly conscious of each other's existence. She was still more reassured. But as Brunhilde glided out from the wings and stood waiting serenely to deliver the summons for Siegmund to accompany her to Valhalla, Margaret glanced at the box again. She could do so now unobserved by any one. This time

she used her opera glasses, and fixing them on Pauline's face, she saw a look there which filled her with Taking advantage of the veil of semi-darkness, Pauline had dropped for the moment the conventional mask which habitually concealed her real thoughts, and at that moment was gazing at Truman Kendall's face with an expression in her eyes which was unmistakable. As he leaned forward, absorbed in the love duet which Brunhilde's unwelcome summons surprises, his handsome face in undisturbed repose. Pauline, thinking herself unobserved, gazed at only him, and all her soul was in her eyes. He drank in a song of love with the intellectual satisfaction derived by a cultivated mind, while she, echoing the song in her heart with its defiance to the gods, spent its fervor on him alone in her gaze, and Margaret, in her quiet corner, heard the song and saw its echo in the eyes of a noble, beautiful girl, and her own heart beat with a strange sensation.

The duel amid the thunder and lightning of the mountain tops which resulted in the slaying of Siegmund was emblematical of the contest in her own heart, and the death of its hero.

The remainder of the evening she sat very still without looking toward them again. All through the last
act, with its undercurrent of renunciation, its recurrent note of eternal farewell, she felt herself lifted to
the superlative heights of self-sacrifice with Brunhilde, and cut off from the world of laughter and
love by a living wall of fire. She would never be so
easily deceived again, for she had once thought that

this man loved her and her alone. But what she had seen to-night in Pauline Slattery's face was proof enough that Truman had also given Pauline reason to think he loved her, Pauline, alone. She would renounce him. She would renounce all love and secure among the heights of abnegation with the circle of magic fire about her, would wait for the advent of some hero more worthy, who was to come with the enchanted sword of truth to her rescue.

"I may have to wait a hundred years, like Brunhilde, before he comes, but I won't mind," she thought, with that comic seriousness which was characteristic of her gravest moods. Just then her eye fell upon Mr. Browning a few seats ahead of them.

"I hope you're not ill, Margaret," said Mrs. Percy, as the curtain fell and they rose to go, "you've been so quiet all the evening."

On their way out she observed Monsieur de Barnot leaving a box with a merry party. As they reached the door a great voice roared in her ear:

"Well, what did you think of it all?"

It was the Honorable Asbury Browning. They had become great friends, although she had never seen him at another afternoon tea. He had become one of the frequenters of Mrs. Percy's boudoir at homes, and had confided to that lady his admiration for her *protégée* and Mrs. Percy, ever ready to make another friend in Congress, had promised her aid.

Mr. Singleton, who must have had a recent run of luck at cards, proposed a supper at the Raleigh, and Mr. Browning hailed the idea with delight, Mrs. Percy acquiesced, and Margaret did not demur, and they were soon driving down the Avenue.

"For my part," said Mr. Browning, as he sat down at the table and stuffed a corner of his napkin in his collar, "I'd just as soon listen to a concert of tin pans as any of this Wagner's music. Give me a comic song like "Mr. Dooley," or a sentimental love song like 'My Only Heaven is in Thine Eyes."

He did not notice Margaret's conscious blush.

"Why I enjoy listening to a street organ better than that slow tum-tum-tum, rub-dub-dub stuff we had to-night. There's no melody in it. It's not music."

Here the waiter bent respectfully over his shoulder and Mr. Browning was compelled to stop and give an order, while the three adorers of Wagner's music looked at one another guiltily.

- "Do you play?" he asked of Margaret.
- "A little."
- "What sort of music do you like best?"
- "I like anything that is real music."
- "Do you like that noise we had to listen to tonight?"
  - "Yes."

He gave a long whistle of astonishment.

- "Well, I thought you were a sensible girl and went just because it was the fashion," he said.
- "But don't you like the wedding march, Mr. Browning?" asked Mrs. Percy, "Wagner composed that."

# 108 The Other Side of the Story

- "O, did he? Well, I guess I don't know what I'm talking about anyway. You see, music and teas and—and women are not in my line, though I like certain kinds of all three."
  - "Especially the last named," suggested Singleton.
- "Especially the last," repeated Mr. Browning, as he looked at Margaret.
- "Perhaps I won't have to wait a hundred years to be rescued," thought she.

### CHAPTER XIII

#### LETTER FROM MISS CASTLETON TO MISS WINSTON

July —

Dear old Ottie.—The hot weather has come. You have no idea what that sentence means in this city with its streets paved with asphalt which softens in the summer sun so that you leave tracks behind you almost as though you were walking in the snow. Then the brick pavements become heated and warped and many of the dwellings have no means of ventilation save the front and rear windows, so that the air never stirs through them much, they are so long and narrow and built always of brick. I've seen hot weather before, but I've never seen anything like this until now. It is pleasanter at the office than anywhere, because there I have an electric fan to cool me off, but if I don't swelter at four o'clock when I start for the house! I manage to exist somehow until dinner time, after which we all hang out on the front steps or on the grass. The regulations here require several feet of frontage left before each house so that we have a little grass plot. Until summer came I didn't know what this regulation was for. did I know the faces of any of the people on this square as I do now. It is astonishing how quickly one becomes acquainted here in the summer. We

can't do much else but sit around after dinner and gossip, and so I have enlarged my list of acquaintances and also become familiar with the appearance of nearly everybody on this square, as well as most of their private affairs.

Everybody who is not in office leaves town when summer begins and many of the office people turn themselves into commuters or trolley catchers in order to be where it is cooler in the evening. who stay in town patronize the electric cars and go down the river to get cool, or drink ice cream soda, eat ice cream, and nibble at goblets of crushed ice. The soda fount man does a flourishing business, and so does the car company; but the gas business must suffer, for every house remains dark. door steps teem with life until bedtime, and the hand organ man finds an audience ready while the children swarm around him and dance to the music. All my society friends of last winter are out of town. Mrs. Bloomer is at her cottage at Long Point. Miss Slattery is at Newport, Mrs. Percy is at Atlantic City, Mrs. Jones is at Bar Harbor, and Miss Castleton expects to go to Barcelona for the month of August. A great many of Mrs. Bandy's boarders have gone; she has lots of empty rooms and the fare is just the same, only worse. Some of the students are left, including Mr. Crane, whom you ought to know, and he says he can't go as long as I stay. I don't know what I should do without him to while away the heated evenings. Our conversation runs something like this:

Crane: Am I on your eligible list, Miss Castleton?
Mottie: No, you're already in the service, aren't
you?

Crane: Seems to me I've been dropped from the rolls.

Mottie: But not dismissed. There were no charges preferred against you.

Crane: Oh, well, I guess I'm suspended then.

Mottie: No, not that. You're simply on furlough.

Crane: Then I'm eligible to reinstatement?

Mottie: Certainly.

Crane: Just so I'm not laid off altogether; still I'd rather have a permanent appointment.

Mottie: Is your name on the special register of eligibles?

Crane: Special? Of course I'm special. Shall I wear a green card like we use in the office?

Mottie: I would rather you didn't; it could be easily misinterpreted.

Crane: May I ask when shall I expect my appointment?

Mottie: That depends on your standing on the efficiency report.

The most rampant symptoms of the tender passion will quail at the suggestion of the efficiency report. I have never yet seen a Government clerk whose gorge did not rise at the thought of it.

I have just stopped and read your last letter and find that you are still in ignorance as to the end of the Truman Kendall entanglement. I thought I had told you all about it long ago. You ought to

have guessed it all from my silence anyway. Didn't I tell you that I renounced him outright and sent him to his other love who had gone to Atlantic City during Lent?

He came to me as soon as she had left town and again suggested a secret marriage. I concealed my indignation but refused very firmly to marry him under any circumstances. It had cost me a little struggle, too, Ottie, dear. The Honorable Geoffrey Kendall will never know how his political fate hung in the balance for a while, and that it was I, little Mottie Castleton, who saved him for his country.

Truman was incensed at my refusal.

"You have no heart whatever," he exclaimed, "and yet you pretend to be a Southern girl."

"I was born in the South," I answered, with my head high, "but I share no sectional prejudice; I am simply an American girl."

"You are simply heartless."

"Do you suppose because I am a Southern girl that I ought to be foolish enough to fall a victim to the wiles of the first man of the world who tries to inveigle me into a secret marriage? Look at it from my standpoint instead of your own. Because you feel sure of one girl who is willing to marry you, and perhaps you intend to marry her really, you want to amuse yourself by proposing to another and are angry at her refusal. I call your behavior downright impertinence." I was angry in my turn.

"Stop!" he cried. "Has Pauline Slattery told you anything?"

"Oh, then I've told the truth, have I?" I began to laugh.

He was so angry then that he turned pale, and all he could say was: "Good afternoon, Miss Castleton," in a very hoarse voice, as he bowed. Another minute and he was gone and I sat laughing until Mrs. Percy discovered me. She thought I had done right, too. She likes Mr. Browning best of all my friends.

Next day the engagement of Miss Slattery and Mr. Kendall was announced. It must have been arranged by telegraph, or else he announced it without consulting her. I understand that the wedding will take place in the spring. "Sic transit homo!" That is what I say every time I look at a piece of fungus on my wall or hear the street organ play "My Only Heaven is in Thine Eyes."

But, seriously, what do you think of the part I have played in the affairs of these two leaders in the smart set of the Capitol? Are you proud of me, Ottie dear? I know you think that I'm something of a flirt and that Truman Kendall met his match, but it is not true, really. It cost me a real pang to give him up, though I could never make you believe it I know.

You asked me also which of the two social strata I preferred, as I am so fortunate as to have the entrée to both. To be honest, I must say that I like the underworld best, we have so much more fun than in swelldom. We always have plenty of

gentlemen at Mrs. Bandy's monthly dances, with good music, even if it is furnished by one violin, one 'cello and a piano. We have plenty of partners at the euchre parties, and most important of all, there is always a good buffet supper afterwards. I never do win anything at the euchres, though I always win just enough points to excite me over the contest. And at Mrs. Percy's informal at homes there are simply men to burn, though they are always very scarce at the kid glove teas. We underlings make no display in the social columns of the daily papers with long lists of names of people who have bored each other; we are content with having all the fun that's going, without caring whether the world knows anything about it or not. I'm to stay with Cousin Mary Bloomer next winter, and I'm very much afraid that I won't have half so much fun, for I will have to give up some of my entertainment in the underworld then, I suppose, and I won't like Of course I will have more to eat, and that will be a very great consolation indeed.

There are times when I wish I could devour Mrs. Bandy's vases and sofa pillows, and I often speculate on the palatability of lace curtains and chandeliers. Why do the houses that have the nicest looking parlors and halls put up such miserable fare? One can't live on furniture or bric-à-brac.

Think of it! Only one more month and I will be back in my beloved Barcelona! True, it is only for a month, but won't we paint the old town red in that time?

I open this to add that I have been transferred to the position of special stenographer to the Solicitor General, and promoted to \$1,200 a year. He is a nice courtly old fellow, all chuck full of law, a little absent minded, but very kind to me. I think we'll get along really well. I am not under any rules, particularly. He doesn't care whether I come early or late, but I have to stay until six sometimes and I work very hard while I am at it. They say I'm very lucky to get the place; it is what they call a "snap."

Be sure to come to Barcelona next month, for Mottie will be there. Your loving friend,

Mottie.

### CHAPTER XIV

#### LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING

In the genial companionship of healthy, lively girls all near her own age, Gertrude Downing's nature developed like a blossom of early spring which finds the sunlight in time to counteract the chilling blasts Her soul expanded, she lost some of late winter. of her awkwardness; that is, she had learned to dissemble somewhat, but was really as bashful as ever. Why did everyone stare at her so? Did they divine that she was from the country? She went about with eyes cast down demurely, fearing to encounter the glances that always followed her. had formed no ties outside the circle of her office friends; she did not stay in one boardinghouse long enough for that. Accustomed all her life to the amenities of home life, it was very hard for her to feel thoroughly satisfied in a six by ten hall room with one window, a doll house closet and a gas stove, for all which she paid five dollars a month. For board she paid twenty dollars per month, and out of the residue of her salary took only what was absolutely necessary, sending home all she could possibly spare. Within a year she was promoted to a thousand dollars. By the advice of Mr. Perry,

the chief of her division, she went to see one of the Senators from her State to request a transfer to the permanent force of the Census. He was a hearty, gruff old fellow, with the conservative views of a typical Southerner. When Jetty confronted him in all the unconscious glory of her beauteous girlhood, with her soft, gentle ways, downcast eyes and faltering speech, as she timidly stated her errand, the old fellow stared at her with his piercing, deep set eyes and said:

"What are you doing here in office I'd like to know? You ought to be at home darning socks for some good man. You're not one of these new women, are you?"

Jetty had risen with flaming cheeks as he began to speak. She started to reply, but something choked her utterance and her eyes filled with tears.

"Never mind, now, don't be angry with me. It's only my way. I ought to have said that you were too pretty a dirl to grind your life out here at a desk in a Government office. You would make some man such a good wife. It makes me wish I were single again like the man in the old song."

But his bold compliment confused her still more. She turned silently away.

"Come, come!" cried he, "this will never do! I'm not the man to turn away a constituent in this style. Sit right down and tell me all about it."

It was impossible to resist his brusque, kindly manner, and when he understood the necessity which

had forced her to leave home and kindred to fight her way, he heartily promised his aid. In the course of time her name was transferred to the permanent roll of the Treasury Department at a smaller salary, and assigned to a bureau located in a building on Lafayette Square. This separated her from all her friends, chief among them being Mr. Perry himself, who had always shown her the kindest consideration. She regretted this separation quite as much as the reduction in salary; she would have to start all over again among strangers.

She was notified of the transfer at four o'clock one Saturday afternoon and ordered to report on Monday morning at the other building. She was very much pleased and very thankful for her great good fortune. The first problem she must consider was how to accommodate her expenses to the change in her salary, and still send home the same amount each month. That evening she went to see Rags of the strong mind, otherwise known as Miss Diana Wilkins, who lived on Capitol Hill, where she rented a room and did light housekeeping.

Jetty was much interested in Diana's room, which betrayed the traits of its owner as a thoroughgoing, energetic bachelor girl. It was a south room of comfortable size, with a case of shelves filled with books in one corner. A wardrobe which a novice would never recognize as a folding bed, and a divan with soft bright pillows filled two other corners, and the fourth was curtained off by a screen. There was a large closet, a mantel adorned with

photographs, a chiffonier, a small desk and a table and a typewriting machine.

"What do you think of my room?" asked Diana, noticing her apparent interest. "I've had my eye on this room for a long time. I knew the girl who had it last winter, and as soon as I heard she was going out to Takoma for the summer I came at once and engaged it. The only way to get your choice of rooms is to look around in the summer when so many of them are vacant. I love a south room. It is warmer in winter and cooler in summer unless it happens to be a back room over the kitchen range. It gets more sunlight in winter and less in summer. My only objection to this room is that there is no bathroom on this floor and I have to go downstairs."

"Where is your washstand?"

For answer Diana lifted the top of the table and showed a bowl and pitcher and all accessories. She also lifted the top of the divan and showed a long box for skirts and wraps.

"I wish you would give me some hints about light housekeeping," said Jetty, "I'll have to economize somehow now my salary is less. I'll have to move again before long and I think I'll move to a place where I can try light housekeeping, too."

For answer she was led behind the screen where Diana showed her an old packing trunk with a chintz cover which she called her kitchen. In it were her gas attachments for heating water for tea and coffee, her bread box and other stores not perishable—

pepper, sugar, salt, a jar of jam, a bottle of tobasco, a box of crackers, some spoons and a knife and fork. She also opened the window and showed her a box containing a bottle of milk and some tin cracker boxes on the sill, in which she kept her cheese, butter and evaporated cream.

"A natural refrigerator is the cheapest," said mater-of-fact Diana.

A chafing dish, some cups and saucers and a few other dishes stood on the shelves of her writing desk. Removing the lid of the chafing dish, Diana exposed some olive sandwiches neatly wrapped in oil tissue.

"I entertained my Shakespeare Club last night," she said, "and these were left over. Have one? The girl in the next room made the chocolate for me as some of them don't drink beer. I made one of my famous rabbits. Come over some Sunday evening and I'll make you a Welsh rabbit. Jack will see you home. He's always here Sunday evenings."

Jetty knew Jack, as a young man whom she had seen in Diana's company at various times; the young man whom the girls called a "sundown doctor." She recognized his picture in a conspicuous place on the mantel.

"There's one other objection to the room," added Diana, "there's only one gas jet, so I can't cook over the gas at night unless I cook in the dark. But as a rule I don't have to use it in the evenings, as I go out to dinner to a house on the next

block. Sometimes I want to use it Sunday evening for tea."

"Do you mind telling me how much it all costs? I want to know whether it would pay me. You see I would have to buy all my implements first."

"Oh, it'll pay you! yes, indeed! I get my dinners for twenty-five cents each, so that if I am invited out or am not hungry enough to go out for it I am that much in pocket. You can get your dishes for almost nothing if you go to the five and ten cent store. As to the other stuff, let me see, a half pound of butter costs 19 cents, and a can of evaporated cream ten cents, and last me a month. It takes three loaves of bread a week at five cents each; makes 60 cents a month for bread. A half pound of coffee, Mocha and Java, half and half, costs 25 cents and lasts, let me see—"

It was more than Jetty could do to follow her into all the details, but she finally announced that her breakfasts and lunches averaged about ten cents each, or six dollars a month, making for dinners and all about \$13.50.

"But how do you keep the room so clean? If you fry meat or eggs—"

"I don't fry anything. I eat Continental breakfasts, bread, butter, milk, coffee, with jam or preserves. Sometimes I boil eggs, but I never cook meat. I buy chipped beef and deviled ham, or sliced tongue sometimes, but I never cook anything greasy on the gas. I wouldn't do that unless I had two rooms."

- "So you save six dollars and a half each month on board alone, and it goes to help you in getting an education."
- "I'm saving for something else, too," said Diana mysteriously.
  - "To get married?"
  - "Married? I should say not. No, indeed!"

For a moment it looked as though Diana would launch into one of her famous harangues against matrimony, but she thought better of it and said:

- "It's a secret yet; you mustn't tell. I'm going to Europe some day, just as soon as I can save enough money."
  - "Will they give you enough leave for that?"
- "I can get two months—take my 30 days' annual leave and 30 days without pay besides. I'll join one of Cook's parties."
  - "And Jack?"
- "Jack knows nothing at all about it. I don't tell all my affairs to the first man that comes along."
- "There's one more thing I want to ask. How do you keep your things in summer time? You don't use the window-sill then?"
- "No, indeed! I don't do light housekeeping but about seven months of the year. The weather is too hot the other five; the butter and everything would melt. It's too hot then to do extra work anyway."
  - "Then you have more time to devote to Jack."
- "Jack! No, indeed! Catch me devoting myself to any man alive."

- "Perhaps you use your typewriter in the summer time."
- "I take extra work sometimes, and I use it in preparing my class exercises. It's an old secondhand machine that I bought at a bargain."
- "You certainly are a wonderful girl," said Jetty, admiringly, as she rose to go, "you do so many things and do them all so well."
- "Wait a minute. I'll walk part of the way home with you. I need some fresh air," and Diana went to the closet to get her hat and took her best jacket out of the box divan. She looked quite well, Jetty thought. In her best coat and hat no one would ever guess that she went by the name of "Rags."

It was a bright, cold, starlit night, with the frost kindling on grass and stones, and that peculiar tang which moisture gives to the atmosphere of the District, especially after nightfall. As they turned into Seventh Street from E street, on their way toward the Carnegie Library, they were met by a well-dressed man who stopped, confronting them and accosted them in a bantering tone:

"Where are you going, my pretty maids?"

Jetty, supposing him to be a friend of Diana's, was about to stop, but Diana caught her by the hand and pulled her on, as she replied immediately:

"Meeting fools on the corner, sir, she said."

They almost ran for a block or two. At last, Jetty, gasping for breath, inquired:

- "Didn't you know him at all?"
- "Never laid eyes on him before."

# 124 The Other Side of the Story

Jetty was horrified.

"Oh, that's nothing. Washington is full of just such cads as that, who seem to have more time than they know what to do with."

"It's a very strange way to find amusement," remarked Jetty. Diana looked at her intently. What sublime innocence, what magnificent beauty the girl had.

"Say, it wouldn't do for you to go out alone in the evenings as much as I do. You're a girl that always attracts attention; its your eyes and hair, and your complexion, too. If you ever do have occasion to go out alone after dark, as we all have to do sometimes, be sure to wear a veil unless you can go all the way on a car."

Jetty hung her head and blushed unseen in the starlight. Complimentary remarks were so embarrassing that she never knew what to say in reply.

# CHAPTER XV

### ON THE PERMANENT ROLL

In the building occupied by the Seventh Auditor of the Treasury, on the west side of Lafayette Square, a small man sat at a desk in a rather large room. On the desk to his right were two electric buttons which were used, one to summon the messenger who sat just outside the door in the corridor, the other to summon certain clerks who sat in rooms across the Beyond the buttons were two baskets labelled "Outgoing Mail" and "For the Auditor," respectively. All across the back of the desk were pigeonholes marked with the names of the various chiefs of divisions in the office. A mass of papers and documents were piled on his left which he was looking over and assorting in the pigeonholes. A whirligig, or revolving book case, filled with books and pamphlets whose titles and dates were indicated on each shelf, stood to the right within easy reach. On another desk near by at his left hand, stood a movable telephone apparatus; also a box of index cards. Books and file cases lined the walls. A large safe. an old-fashioned sofa, a wardrobe, a letter press, chairs, and a large table comprised the principal remaining furniture. A screen in one corner concealed a washstand from view. The man at the desk was Chief Clerk of the Seventh Auditor's Office, as was indicated by a legend over the door leading from the corridor. His name was Wilmer Coburn.

The room was the central one of three rooms about the same size, all communicating and each having a door leading to the corridor. The door to the left bore the information, "Anteroom, Seventh Auditor," and the Auditor himself occupied the room to the right of the Chief Clerk's room. Ordinary visitors who had business with the Auditor were kept waiting in this anteroom, while those of more importance were admitted directly from the hall or through the middle room. A messenger of powerful frame stood guard at the door of the Auditor's room and permitted only the elect to enter from the corridor.

Wilmer Coburn had entered the service when a mere boy, first serving as a messenger. Later he had obtained a clerkship and risen by degrees from class to class until he reached the limit of salary allowed to a Department clerk in the Treasury Department. Finally the place of chief clerk was made vacant and he had been advanced to that position and promoted in salary to two hundred dollars So efficient were his services considered that in the preceding Congress a certain appropriation bill had contained a clause providing for an increase of two hundred and fifty dollars more in his present salary. Through some mischance the bill had failed of passage, but it was confidently expected that a similar clause would be inserted in the bill, which was certain to pass in the ensuing Congress.

He was a dapper little man with a mincing gait suggesting the idea that he had worn skirts too long when a boy. He was about fifty years of age, but by affecting a youthful style of dress, the newest cut of coat and tie, and the latest thing in hats, and on account of a certain plumpness of visage, he appeared at least fifteen years younger. He had full light reddish whiskers, carefully trimmed to a point, and ash blond hair, which shades do not reveal the first gray hairs that come with increasing years.

Mr. Coburn had always been a "ladies' man." He made the rounds every day to each lady's desk and endeavored by his conversational powers to make friends of them all. He had a womanish curiosity as to the value they set upon these attentions of his, and if he suspected any of the lady clerks of any preference for some other man who was a mere clerk, he would always resent it. Sometimes he would make her suffer for it in one way or another, even though she might be in the densest ignorance as to the cause. At other times he would punish the man, or attempt to do so, by putting him on some desk away from the lady he admired. For these reasons, as well as other pretexts, he kept the clerks changing from one desk and room to others and putting them on unaccustomed work which they would have to learn anew just as if they had just been appointed. He had been in the office for thirty years and he thought he knew women as well as any man in the world, and each one was for sale; those whom the

world knew as good women were so only because the bid was too low, that was all. This presumption was based upon the women he had known the best, that best being the worst in the Government They had admired and petted him when service. he went into the service as a boy, and ever since then he had been intimately associated with them in various capacities in the office and outside. always went with his wife to church on Sundays and carried round the contribution box with proper dignity, and sat through the sermon afterward with solemn countenance, it was assumed by the elect that he was one of them and certain unsavory rumors as to his gallantries were discredited as a slander designed to injure one of the faithful.

On this particular morning Mr. Coburn's desk was so full of work and kept him so busy that he had neglected to read the morning paper which lay airing on top of the bookcase, and he did not even hear the bell which summoned him to the Auditor's room until it had rung twice. He arose and entered the next room. Returning in a few minutes he discovered a lady standing with her back to him looking toward the anteroom as though hesitating whether or not to go in there.

"A deuced fine figure, by gad!" he mutteed, as he leaned forward with his hands on his desk, waiting for her to turn round. When she did do so he fell back in his chair with a gasp, where he sat for a full

gazing on the most beautiful face he had

"I beg your pardon," he said at last, as he rose, "won't you sit down?"

He indicated a chair near by.

"I—I was told to hand you this," said the girl, in a soft, timid voice.

"Oh, yes!" as he glanced at the paper, "you are the new clerk. Sit down a moment until I can get out the necessary blanks."

She sat down with downcast eyes.

"I thought I had seen pretty women before," he muttered, "but none of them can hold a candle to this one."

He rang to summon the swarthy messenger just outside his door, and sitting down, began to write on a memorandum pad. He tore off the slip and handed it to the messenger.

"Take that round to all the divisions," he ordered.

It contained the information that the Auditor was gone for the day and the mail would be signed "Acting Auditor."

"I'll be back in a minute," he said to the girl, as he went out into the corridor, and, walking across the hall, he entered a door labelled "Correspondence Division."

"Kimball," he said, addressing a man who sat writing, "don't you need another clerk?"

"I certainly do. I could use one to very good advantage this very morning on this annual report, and the current work is piling up, too." He indicated a mass of letters on his desk, each briefed, num-

bered, and in many cases with a "rough" of the desired reply written on a slip of paper and strapped with it by a rubber band.

"Well, there's a new clerk this morning, a young lady and the prettiest thing you ever laid your eyes on. The vacancy she is to fill belongs to Jermyn's division, but it'll never do to send her there, a tender young thing like her; he'd scare her to death."

"Or work her to death."

"The only drawback about it is that I'm afraid you won't get any work out of any of your other clerks. The men won't be able to work for looking at her, and the women won't work any better from jealousy. I tell you she's a raving beauty."

"You quite rouse my curiosity. She seems to have turned your head already."

"Oh, she's mighty easy to look at. Well, I'll bring her over. Mind, you're not to fall in love with her."

A few minutes later Miss Downing was led in by the chief clerk and introduced to Mr. Kimball, the chief of the correspondence division, and Mr. Jones, one of his assistants who occupied a desk in the same room. Everybody in the rooms adjoining were craning their necks to get a view of the beauty whose fame had already gone the rounds. It was not every new clerk that was brought in by the chief clerk himself.

As Kimball grasped her hand with a quiet word of welcome she looked up into a pair of gentle gray eyes and read there the admiration which she had not as yet learned to contemplate without perturbation, and for the first time she was conscious of a certain delight in it, a new, delicious joy that she should seem pleasing to his eye.

- "Which of these desks do you prefer, Miss Downing? You may have your choice. I believe this one has the best light."
- "That belongs to Jones, doesn't it?" asked the chief clerk.
- "Oh, Jones sits anywhere. He isn't particular in the least."

Jetty blushed as she realized with a thrill that she was receiving undue consideration. New clerks usually take the seats that are not already taken.

"Now what sort of pen do you use, Miss Downing? Make out a requisition on this slip for whatever you want. Do you like your pencils soft or hard?"

In an hour's time she was settled at her typewriter with pens, ink, pencils, erasers, pads and all requisites at hand, and Mr. Kimball was explaining the work to her, lingering possibly a fractional part of a minute longer than was necessary.

"No abbreviations are allowed in the address. Keep a list of the record numbers of each case you treat. Always use double space, drop a line after "Sir," begin "very respectfully" at thirty and "Seventh Auditor" at—Oh, no, the mail is Acting to-day. Everything is signed 'Acting Auditor."

In the course of the next hour or two every clerk in the division, and many from neighboring divisions, came streaming in on various pretexts, apparently on official business intent, but really to see the new clerk. One of these was a large, handsome woman in black with very beautiful soft white hair and a clear complexion which betrayed the hue of health. She was long past the flush of youth, but so well preserved and her manner so vivacious that they belied the crow's feet which were almost the only sign she bore of the advance of time. She was very stout and talked volubly, with a catch in her voice as though she were always out of breath. A strong odor of French perfume heralded her approach.

"Tot, you have a rival now," whispered a man to her just before she entered the room, "Coburn's lost his head completely and Kimball's going daft, and none of us other fellows can do a lick of work."

"Oh, you shut up, just let me see for myself," and going in she got herself introduced and at once plunged into conversation.

Mrs. Perkins considered herself the belle of the Bureau and spent most of her energies in scheming to frustrate the plans of her supposed rivals. She felt much injured if she failed to foil any other woman in her designs and never forgave the other woman, although she would welcome the man back to her side with effusion, as soon as he tired of another.

After the formula of "where are you from," "how do you like Washington," and "who is your influence," Mrs. Perkins took a seat beside Jetty and began to tell the story of her life. It was her lunch hour and she had reasons of her own for wishing to

gain the girl's confidence. The story, as she told it, began with a description of her lovely flat on H Street near by, and wouldn't Miss Downing come to see her?

"I'll let my beau see you home if you're real good; he's so awfully good to me—takes me to the theatre and out driving. He'd marry me in a minute if I'd have him, but I've had enough of matrimony. Once is enough for me."

She felt so sorry for young girls alone in a great city like Washington. She had a daughter who had recently entered a convent in Baltimore, "about your own age, child. You remind me of her so much. It almost broke my heart to give her up. Of course she would have married in time and I would have had to give her up anyway. But this is different. Just to think I can never see her alone again! She was always old for her years; she's a great deal older than I am now in ways. You see, I married when I was a mere child. You wouldn't think I was twice your age, would you?"

Jetty had never seen gray hair on the head of so youthful a person before, and gray hair in Corinth usually went with middle age. She glanced at the smooth, creamy skin with its lines traced by the years, and thought she was paying a compliment by saying:

"You look fifty and I am twenty-two."

Assispicion of a smile lurked about Kimball's mouth as "Tot" left the room with an aggrieved countenance. There was hardly a more unsophisticated girl in Washington than Miss Downing, he thought, and that very innocence was its own protection.

On the days when the notice was sent round that the Auditor was absent the lady called "Tot," in disparagement of her great size, always lingered at her desk after four o'clock until most of the other clerks had gone, when she presented herself at the door of the chief clerk's room, and if the coast was clear went in, ostensibly to use the telephone, but really for a quiet gossip with her particular friend, Mr. Coburn.

On the day of Jetty's advent into the Bureau, Tot waited, according to custom, until about ten minutes past four, when she went into this room, and stopping by the telephone, she looked through the book until the messenger had gone out and the corridor became quiet, when she turned to the little man with an inquiring look. He was standing at the table examining the mail that had just been brought in.

"What is the matter witn you to-day?" she asked.
"I've spoken to you twice and you don't answer.
Is anything doing to-day?"

"Oh, the champagne's there," he said. He had been thinking of Jetty. "I really ought to go down town on some business, but never mind, go on in," he indicated the deserted room of the Auditor, "and get the glasses ready and I'll bring in the bottle presently."

The woman took some glasses off the washstand and carrying them into the next room, she went to the mantel where the ice pitcher stood and filled them half full of ice. Then she placed them on a small table near the window and drew up two chairs to the table, and seating herself in one of them, sat with chin in hand, waiting. The shades were drawn and the afternoon sun shining through them, threw a bright yellow glow over her which was reflected in the furnishings of the room.

"It's that fool girl from Tennessee!" she cried. "I wonder if I can make him forget her!"

Presently the chief clerk entered from his own room, the only means of entering at present, as the door to the hall was locked with a latch key which was used by the Auditor alone.

"What makes you so slow to-day?"

"I have to make sure that the corridor is empty, don't I?" He filled the two glasses with wine and then turned to her with a curious glance.

"She's getting coarse and cross, too," he thought, but what he said was, "Well, what's the news to-day? How did you like the new beauty?"

"Oh, she's a dear young thing, isn't she?" affecting a patronizing sweetness.

He handed her a glass of wine and sat opposite her and both began to drink in silence. Usually she entertained him with all the office gossip, but to-day there seemed to be a dearth of news. Instead of talking she held up the glass to gaze at the rich tint of the wine as though passing upon its merits.

"Did you find out her age?" he asked.

"Yes, she told me her age and mine, too."
And they laughed together over the champagne.

# CHAPTER XVI

## NOT ALL THE WORLD LOVES A LOVER

Roswell Kimball had also risen from the ranks and had been promoted from grade to grade until he had reached the highest salary attainable by any clerk but the chief clerk. To be a successful Department clerk, several things are necessary which are not usually required in any other walk of life. First, the capacity for closest attention to all the multitudinous minor details which are considered essential to the proper treatment of official papers and records. In a business office the first requisite is neatness and dispatch, in a Department of the government it matters not how long a paper is delayed in passing through the routine from bureau to bureau, if each clerk in passing upon it makes the proper entry, just the right length of brief, affixes his initials properly to each step taken by him, and makes the correct notation on each paper as well as on the records. Also, it is essential for a clerk who would win success to study the moods, methods and wishes of his superiors and especially the chief clerk of his bureau, whose power is often such that he can make or mar the fortunes of those who work under him. Also, he should have some influential friend on the outside, usually it is a senator or representative in Congress. If this friend is powerful enough, the clerk can be promoted

without the other two requirements. If he has no other outside influence, it is absolutely necessary that he stand well with the chief clerk, for no matter how well or how faithfully he performs his duties, that fact will never appear on the efficiency report and, as he cannot approach the head of the Bureau except through the chief clerk, for him there is no appeal. The power of the chief clerk is absolute so far as the clerk is concerned. He is the autocrat whose word can take off the official head provided the clerk allows himself to be provoked into defiance, as sometimes occurs, or provided he gives any reason whatever for the chief clerk to recommend his dismissal.

Kimball, in addition to the capacity for taking great pains, was also specially fitted for certain duties connected with the bureau as he had taken a course in law and was the law clerk of the bureau as well as chief of the division of correspondence. He was detailed at times to make certain tours of inspection to various customs offices in the principal cities. had been connected with the Philippine service in Manila and had never been able to rid himself of a pronounced sallowness of skin acquired there. Otherwise he was a man of fine physique, quiet manners and great force of character. He was a devotee of music and attended all the grand operas, not because it was the fashion, but because he loved the language of the soul. He often went alone to one of the cheaper seats in the family circle and claimed that the music sounded best at that distance.

He had married when quite a young man, falling a victim to a designing would-be mother-in-law, a genus not yet extinct in Washington, and with him marriage had not only been a failure, but a catastrophe. Too soon he realized the mistake. His wife whom he had regarded as a guileless young thing, he discovered to be a heartless coquette. He had placed her on the pinnacle of his own pure ideals, but the storms of life had cast her down beneath his feet; the fair image of marble was only tarnished and shattered clay. Not wishing to drag her infidelity through the public tedium of a divorce court, he had, after many difficulties, managed to obtain a legal separation on other grounds.

All this had happened long ago. It was a closed chapter in his life, one which he never opened. The scar on his soul had burned deep, and he had lost faith in all womankind with that human inconsistency which judges the mass by its own experience with the individual.

Skilled in legal lore, with the bearing of a diplomat, rare skill in conversation, the culture acquired by a liberal education and finished by travel, Roswell Kimball would probably have succeeded in private life far better than in the public service had he been ambitious enough to venture forth. There are few successes in office of whom the same can be said. He was not ambitious, but world weary. He had lost his faith and had learned to take life as it came. Stranded on the sands of doubt, he was content to look on at the passing barques, some struggling

against the tide, some floating with the current. Why join in the strife? He only looked on, vaguely wondering what it all meant, looking forward to the end with some curiosity as to the solution of the mystery that has puzzled all ages. With a great deal of knowledge he claimed to know nothing and belonged to the great modern school who doubt everything, the authenticity of Shakespeare's works, the guilt of Aaron Burr, the greatness of Washington, the efficacy of medical science, and the revelations of the Bible; he could not be said to believe in either God or man. He was sincere in his doubt and even his unbelief was tinged with it. He did not really disbelieve. He simply did not know.

Suave and courteous in manner, he was very severe at times. A creature of moods, he would often break forth into oaths over some slight mistake, scolding the clerk who committed it in harsh language, but afterward he would always send for the clerk and offer him a good cigar, endeavoring in his own way to make amends, or if the clerk was a lady, he would bring her a rose or an apple next day, or perhaps invite her out to lunch. His clerks had grown accustomed to his peculiarities and understood him so well that when he swore at them they did not mind it in the least, but speculated on the reward they were to receive afterward. Much more lenient than the average chief of division, he was really esteemed and beloved by his clerks. After the appearance of Jetty Downing in his division he became a changed man. Before he had been a creature of moods; now he was a man of one mood and that was a pleasant one. Kindly by nature, he now allowed his geniality to expand until it smiled on all the world. The daily society of her sweet, pure girlhood was a continual sermon in lyric rhyme to the cynical man of the world.

Jetty, glowing in the sunlight of his admiration, blossomed forth as a rose. She soon learned to know when his eyes were upon her by the thrills she felt, to hide her bashfulness with a playful show of words, to look calmly into every pair of masculine eyes save one, to walk with a certain dignity into a room filled with chattering voices, even though they hushed as she appeared, to hear her own voice in a crowded room without quaking; and yet she never quite overcame a certain awkwardness that blended with the unconscious power in her great beauty, her modest demeanor and her sweet, shy smile made her a unique and enchanting figure. Love teaches many things, and Jetty was in love with all the ardor of her soul. The smouldering fires were kindling.

It was midwinter when she went to the Seventh Auditor's Office, and when the efficiency report appeared in July her name was not on the list, but on the efficiency report of the following January she discovered her name next to the bottom of the list of clerks of her grade. Kimball, observing her surprise and humiliation, hastened to explain that he had nothing to do with preparing the report as it was a matter solely in the chief clerk's hands, he

being alone responsible for the grading of the clerks. He assured her that if he had his way her name would be placed nearer the top of the list.

"I thought Mr. Coburn was a friend of mine," she said. "Would you advise me to ask him about it?"

"It can do no harm, I suppose."

Accordingly Miss Downing presented herself in the chief clerk's room with the air of awkward dignity that always made her beauty more conspicuous.

"Well, what can I do for Miss Downing this morning? I'm always glad to see the ladies. Have a chair. Not in a hurry, are you?" as she remained standing.

She had been in the office of the Seventh Auditor of the Treasury for almost a year and had so far been on apparently friendly terms with the chief clerk. He stopped at her desk each day, greeting her quite pleasantly, and seemed to enjoy a daily side talk with her, especially when Kimball happened to be present. He often brought her special work to do and praised the quality of her work as well as the short time in which she did it. With all the apparent languor of her movements she was really very quick at her work. She seemed one of those slow moving, indolent creatures who never worked in her life, and yet she was one of the most rapid typewriters in the Bureau. As she turned off her work rapidly she had frequent intervals of leisure, and Kimball would often hand her a magazine or paper to look at while she waited for more work, and she was always ready to stop reading when work came. The chief clerk

was opposed to having any clerk appear idle even for a moment and had been known to say that they must always look busy even if they were not.

"Well, what is it?" asked Mr. Coburn, as he leaned back in his chair and gazed at her across his desk.

"I saw the efficiency report this morning," she faltered, "and I would like to ask you why my name is next to the bottom of the list?"

"Are you at the bottom? Let me see."

He opened a drawer, and glancing over some papers, said:

"Oh, you mean the lowest of your grade, the nine hundred class. Well, somebody has to be at the bot tom. You're a new clerk yet."

"Yes, but there are five new clerks who came in after I did who are put ahead of me and I don't see why, unless its because they're all men."

"Oh, that has nothing at all to do with it, I assure you, my dear young lady, nothing at all. Look at it. You see the paper is signed by the Auditor himself. That takes all the responsibility from me. I can only refer you to him. He would probably send you to Kimball. Did you ask Kimball anything about it?"

- "Yes."
- "What did he say?"
- "He sent me to you."
- "See here, your mark isn't a bad one at all; 86.10 is a fair record. If you can keep that up you'll keep your place all right."
  - "But this report is supposed to show my chances

for promotion, isn't it? and as long as I am so near the bottom of the list I must have last chance to be promoted, and I need it so much, more than you can imagine. Would you advise me to seek outside influence?"

He leaned forward earnestly:

"My dear young lady, whatever put such an idea in your head? Outside influence has nothing whatever to do with promotions in this office. Haven't you seen a copy of an official order from the Secretary of the Treasury forbidding such a thing under penalty of dismissal? Just go on back to your desk now and keep cool, and everything will come out all right. Don't worry, Miss Jetty, don't worry." He had lately begun to address her by her first name, probably because he had heard Kimball use that form of address, and aspired to be on as intimate a footing as he. His way of doing it was paternal rather than impertinent, or so it seemed to the simpleminded girl.

She went back a little bewildered, realizing that somebody had prevaricated and hardly daring to fix the responsibility on the chief clerk. Even unsophisticated Jetty Downing knew that the circular forbidding the seeking of outside influence was a "deadhead," and she believed that Kimball had spoken the truth when he told her who was responsible for the grading of the clerks.

She told Kimball the result of her interview that afternoon as they took a walk round the White Lot and through the Mall.

## The Other Side of the Story

144

"I would advise you to get your friend Senator X—— to speak about it to the Auditor," said Kim ball. "Of course I'm not supposed to give such advice to any one under any circumstances, so you mustn't say anything about it. I can't see why you who are doing exactly the same work as a twelve and a fourteen hundred dollar clerk should be marked below a bran new clerk at seven twenty who simply records."

- "Senator X ---- was defeated in the last election."
- "But his term doesn't expire for another year, you know."

It was one of those balmy days which midwinter sometimes brings to the District, when winter clothes herself in sunshine, throwing off for a time her own guise of ice and snow and appearing in the refulgent garb of her milder sister, spring. They stopped and sat down on one of the rustic seats facing the Monument which reared its head beyond the trees. Many people were out enjoying the fine weather and carriages and automobiles were plentiful around the ellipse. Everyone noticed the beautiful girl with her troubled face and the dark, handsome man who seemed absorbed in her.

Jetty produced for Mr. Kimball's inspection a copy of the efficiency report which she had made that morning.

- "You know I have nothing whatever to do with making it out," he assured her.
- "Well," he said presently, "I'm glad Olmstead's name is at the top. You see he was assistant file

clerk until about a year ago, when he was made file clerk without any change of salary, and the file clerk, who gets fourteen hundred dollars, was made assistant file clerk and kept his original salary."

"A nine hundred dollar clerk does the work that was considered worth fourteen hundred and vice versa? how queer!"

"Oh, there's a reason. Of course you'll never mention my name in connection with any of this information. It's no secret. Everybody knows that the fourteen hundred dollar clerk is drunk most of the time and unfit for duty. For that reason he was deposed from the responsibility of the duty without losing any salary on account of it, while Olmstead was given the responsibility without the salary, and we are treated to the strange phenomenon of a fourteen hundred dollar clerk assistant to one who gets only nine hundred dollars. But I see Olmstead is in line for the next promotion to one thousand anyway. He certainly deserves it, I must say.

"And here's Klopston fifth on the list. Why, that fellow loafs half the time at his desk and stays out sick every other Monday, as well as about three days after every pay day."

"I wonder why?" queried the girl, innocently.

"He is marked 100 on attendance, too. And here's Miss Stewart's name next to his. She's been in this office five years and has never learned to do anything by herself yet. She goes to some other clerk to ask questions every day as though she never did the work before, and yet she's marked above

you in ability. And look at this name, Elder. He is the old man who has some business interests outside and they seem to have a grudge against him on account of it. He was about eighteen on the last list, but I see now they have put him at the bottom. Do you know why? Because he spoke his mind one day and told Coburn some pretty plain truths. All the good it has done is to mark the old man down on his efficiency. Coburn will never forgive the old man, either.

"And look at this name, Clarke; he is the nice old man in the index room; he's the best indexer in the office, too, and has been here twenty years at the same salary. Younger men come in every year and are promoted over him in turn. He is a quiet, patient, painstaking clerk; one of the best in the office, but he hasn't tried to make friends with the chief clerk.

"Oh, say, I wouldn't give this thing a thought. The whole business is a mere farce. They didn't mark us that way when I was a lower grade clerk. Of course, you know, I'm not supposed to speak my mind like this and I wouldn't do it to anyone else."

Jetty was blushing with downcast eyes.

"Miss Jetty," he went on, presently, a slight change in his voice, "suppose you let me speak to one of my friends for you. Senator Rose from my State is a good friend of mine and has a pull on the Auditor, too. If you'll let me I'll speak to him about you." A strange light gleamed in his eyes as he spoke.

"No," said the girl, rising, "I'll go to see my own friend, Senator X—— from my State."

The widow called "Tot," whose name was Mrs. Perkins, though she belonged in Jermyn's division, where the clerks were kept at their desks like children at school, managed somehow to know everything that was going on in all the other divisions of the Bureau. Women of her class spend much time in the halls and at the desks of other clerks, although their names are placed high on the efficiency report, and they draw larger salaries than many who stick to their desks all day.

The progress of the Department romance in the correspondence division was watched with much interest by all Kimball's clerks, the women with their inborn love for matchmaking, and the men with goodnatured grumbling because Kimball gave nobody else a chance. All the clerks looked on with goodwill save Mrs. Perkins, who as the belle of the Bureau, resented the implied insensibility to her own charms.

- "Mr. Kimball!" she called to him in the hall one day, "what's the matter with you nowadays? You haven't been to see me in six months. I'm still on H street and my flat is quite as comfortable as ever. You haven't forgotten the way, have you?"
- "No, I believe I went to see you once when I was specially invited."
- "Now, Kimbie, how can you be so cold? How can you forget?" and she looked at him with a glance that was meant to be very fetching.

"I wonder what she's driving at?" he thought, as he passed on. The appearance of a short, thick set, dark haired man had cut short the conversation. It was Jermyn, the remorseless.

He wondered still more when he saw Mrs. Perkins renew her endeavors to establish an intimacy with Miss Downing. She came in again that very day and sat by the girl for the full half-hour while Kimball and Jones were out. This time she talked about the goodness of Mr. Coburn, "the kindest man in the world, my dear; you must by all means stand well with him, you know, or you'll never be promoted in the world. He admires you very much, too. He's a lady's man, you know."

- "Oh, I thought he was a married man," said Jetty. "Or is he divorced?"
- "Oh, no, he has a wife. Did you think he was divorced?"
- "I didn't think anything about it. I don't believe in divorces, though. 'What God has joined together let not man put asunder.'"

The woman's face lit up with a triumphant smile. She saw how she could punish Kimball for his defection; not now, but a little later, after his love affair with the girl had reached a more serious stage. As she left the room, he came in by another door in time to see her malicious smile.

It was more than Kimball could bear. He resolved to speak to her, and the next time he met her in the hall he said:

"I have a request to make of you, Mrs. Perkins."

- "Oh, have you? It used to be 'Tot.' Are you coming round to see me this evening? I'm charmed, I'm sure."
- "Very sorry, but I have an engagement this evening. I can say what I want to say right now."
  - "Now Kimbie, remember old times."
  - "I want to speak to you about Miss Downing."
  - "Yes, you've gone back on me for her."
- "Well, you have every other man in the office in your leading strings, haven't you? All slaves to your charms."

She beamed on him gratefully.

- "While she has only me."
- "Oh, then, you admit it, do you? Of all the impudence!"
  - "Yes, I admit it. I'm very fond of Miss Downing."
  - "Why don't you say you're in love with her?"
- "I do say it then. Does that suit you? I love her with all my heart."
  - "And she--"
  - "That's what I want to speak to you about."
- "Oh, he wants my sympathy and help. Why, of course I will do all I can for you."
- "She really meant what she said. She would have aided him gladly in order to make his discomfiture more certain in the end.
  - "Your sympathy, no. Your help, yes."
  - "What can I do for you, Kimbie, dear?"
- "I want you to let Miss Downing alone. Keep away from her. That is all I want to ask of you." The lady was furious.

"Good Heavens! The man has gone crazy about the little simpleton. Too good for me, eh? Well, I like that, and from you of all people! I'll keep away from her all right, but I'll teach you a lesson while I'm about it. I'll——"

But he was out of hearing by this time and she was out of breath, so she flung herself back to her desk, where she sat in silent anger for some time. In the course of an hour's time a message came summoning her to the chief clerk and, forcing a smile, she went to him with her usual playful air.

He held some papers in his hand as she entered and an observer would have thought him intent on official business. He spoke in a low tone and she was standing very near so that no chance comer might hear.

"I'm going to be absent on leave to-morrow and all next week and I want to make an engagement with you. I can't come in the evenings, you know, but what days will it be convenient for me to call?"

"You see, I don't want to use up my annual leave so early in the year, but I don't mind taking sick leave," she replied. "Suppose I stay at home and report sick from Tuesday until Saturday of next week. I don't feel at all well, and need a rest anyway. I must go back Saturday, or they will count Sunday, too. Say, I've something to tell you about Kimbie and that girl."

<sup>&</sup>quot;They're not engaged?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;No, but-"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Keep it until next week then."

# Not All the World Loves a Lover

151

"All right, I'll look for you," and she beamed on him over her shoulder on her way to the door, while he turned to see another clerk who had stood waiting with some papers until the interview was over.

### CHAPTER XVII

### THE GRAND PASSION

Inspired by the example of Miss Wilkins, Jetty had moved soon after her transfer to a house in walking distance of Lafayette Square, situated in the region beyond Seventeenth Street, which is blocked up by the War Department on the east. Here she rented a room without board and prepared her own breakfasts and lunches. She had not been able to make a sitting room of her bed room as Diana had done, the wash stand would remain in evidence and the cover over the sofa could not conceal the fact that it was really a bed. As the landlady did not rent her parlor as the majority of such ladies do in Washington, Jetty did not feel the necessity, while there, of having a parlor in which to receive callers. Not that she had many. Kimball came occasionally to take her out, but seldom called to spend the evening and she had no other gentleman friend who came She went for her dinner to a house regularly. near by.

There were three other rooms on her floor, an elderly gentleman was in the third floor front, a young man was in the hall room next to him, and a lady in the room next to Jetty's. The lady and the young man were almost inseparable. They went to

their meals together and seemed to use both their two rooms in common. It was one of those Bohemian relationships, often entirely blameless, which the conditions of Department life have made familiar. The hall room, which was fitted up very cosily with their books, pictures, a sofa bed and a bright rug, they used for a sitting room when they had company, and the young man had the entrée at all hours to the other room. Jetty saw him going to and fro in and out of the larger room without knocking very early in the morning and at all hours of the evening. She supposed of course that they were brother and sister or man and wife. But one day the landlady was making a visit to Jetty's room; it was the fifteenth of the month and the lady was very civil, as all landladies are on pay day.

- "I want to introduce you to Miss Swan," she said to Jetty.
  - "Who is she?"
- "She's the girl on this floor. Haven't you seen her?"
  - "Did I understand you to say Miss?"
  - "Yes, Miss Swan."
  - "And who is the young man with her?"
- "Oh, he's just an old friend. They have been friends for years."
- "Well, I thought they were married. They must be secretly married, then."
  - "Possibly, but I'm sure I don't know. Why?"
- "Oh, well, they certainly don't keep their intimacy secret."

# 154 The Other Side of the Story

"Oh, she's all right. You'll like her. Wait until you know her."

"Know her! Do you suppose I want to know such a person? I don't intend to know her under any circumstances."

"He's one of the nicest men; he's a great student and a graduate of two or three universities, and has all sorts of medals for running and rowing."

"Well, that has nothing to do with the case. Either they leave this house or I do."

"How long have you been in Washington? You must be from the country."

"I am from the country and I'm proud of the fact."

"That's a very common state of affairs in Washington. Besides, they are probably engaged."

"But that doesn't excuse such conduct."

All argument was useless as the landlady remained firm, looking at the matter on its practical side alone, and preferring one vacant room to two. At the end of the month Jetty moved to new quarters on Nineteenth Street in the same quarter of town. Her room here was more impossible as a sitting room than before, and the landlady, though a little more careful in the people she accommodated, rented all her rooms, including the parlor, so the girl had no place at all to entertain gentleman callers.

However, she cared very little for that. She was too unsophisticated for coquetry and was content with what she saw of Kimball by day and her dreams of him at night. The young men she met at Sunday school and Church were outnumbered so far by the girls that a timid girl like herself was left in the Her extraordinary beauty had led background. some of these beaux to seek her out, but her manner was so quiet and indifferent, so utterly at variance with all their previous experiences, that they rarely sought her society the second time. She was not displeased, but a little puzzled by this, not knowing that it was old fashioned to wait for the gentlemen to make all the advances, that not one would think of calling on her without an invitation. In Corinth this behavior in a lady would have been considered highly improper. She made no friends either in Church or Sabbath school. The attendance at both was very large and she did not know how to push her way, or even that such a thing was necessary. After her venture into light housekeeping, she began to neglect the Sabbath class, going once in a great while, though she went each Sabbath to Church.

The sermons were not like those at home. She had never known this pastor to threaten eternal punishment or to even mention hell fire. His manner was calm, earnest and forceful, and his voice gentle, as though his words came from a heart filled with pity for sin and love for the erring. His language was simple, his sermons brief and always full of encouragement. She never heard him without feeling that it helped her, and often wondered why his fame was not so great as that of Beecher or Talmage. He held a little levee after each sermon where he would welcome strangers as well as his parishioners,

and she sometimes ventured to approach and shake his hand, but was too shy to really make herself known to him; there was always such a crowd pressing round to see him.

Some time after Kimball's interview with Mrs. Perkins, he noticed a slight change in Jetty's man-She was not cold, but silent, and ner toward him. avoided his eye. He suspected Mrs. Perkins at once. Taking advantage of a momentary lull in his work and the absence of Jones at the noon hour, he went to her desk, ostensibly to ask her to compare a letter with him. She read it to him promptly and was secretly disturbed when he lingered afterward. was sweet to hear her voice, even when it was only using the cut and dried forms of an official letter. He sat for a full half minute without speaking while she closely examined a pile of reports. For the moment they were alone. Presently he reached forth and grasped her hand under the extension shelf of her desk. The little hand began to tremble in his own and he held it more firmly.

- "Jetty, when may I come to see you again?"
- "I have no place to entertain callers."
- "Well, the weather is fine now; it's the merry month of May, and to-morrow will be Sunday, and I want you to go with me for a stroll in the country."
- "I go to Church on Sunday." She made a faint attempt to release her hand. Why did it tremble so?
- "That's all right, after Church, then. Shall I meet you at Church and go for a ride on the cars? I

would suggest a drive, but if we drive I can't say what I wish to say."

"We have dinner at one o'clock on Sundays."

"But we can get dinner somewhere. Come, don't say no. Say yes, and make me happy, won't you? It's a very little word."

She looked up at him at last and smiled an assent. At this moment the chief clerk walked in.

"Here, write this telegram just as quick as you can, please," he said, as he handed the rough to Jetty, and as she prepared to write it he glanced sharply at Kimball who had gone back to his desk. He stroked his beard meditatively.

Later on, after disposing of the telegram, he stopped at her desk as he passed through the room and inquired:

- "Do they work you very hard nowadays?"
- "Oh, not very."
- "Jermyn's division is behind in the recording now. They need more clerks over there badly. I wouldn't be surprised if the whole office has to stay until five to help them out. At this rate the Auditor will issue a five o'clock order in a day or two."

Such orders were prepared and issued at the instigation of the chief clerk, but he was never known to acknowledge their responsibility.

The next morning Kimball was waiting at the Church door when Jetty came out, her face aglow with the pure ecstacy of devotion, her drooping lids half concealing the mystic shadows in her eyes, and

her pink cheeks flushing deeper at sight of him, and his heart bounded with a strange new joy.

"I am forty years old," he thought, as he glanced at the radiant figure at his side, "and she has made me a new man."

For love had transformed the skeptic. No one can believe in love until he has loved and been loved, and he began to realize that the grand passion was not a mere attraction that draws two people together, but was built upon a solid foundation of mutual respect, its corner stone being mutual sympathy and unselfish regard, its lines pointing upward toward the stars. Its inspiration held unknown heights and depths for the man who had once scoffed at love. Jetty had taught him much, with her soft, modest ways and her gentle voice. If he did not yet believe in women, he had implicit confidence in one of them.

He suggested that they take the Brightwood line and she acquiesced. He preferred that road because he knew it would not be crowded and she assented because she had no preference, being happy anywhere with him.

He suggested lunch as they alighted at the end of the line, but she preferred to go at once for a walk, and so they strolled on past a long row of suburban homes until they reached the woods. When the last house was passed they turned aside and a few steps led them to a wooded way as silent and deserted as though miles from the haunts of men.

"The crowds all go westward," he remarked,

"and few people seem to appreciate the beauties of this portion of the District."

"All the better for those who do."

They were walking side by side down a narrow roadway that stretched ahead, the foliage meeting above like an arched corridor, the tracery of whose vaulted roof gleamed with the blue of heaven. The dense forest on either hand quivered with its myriad life, and sighed softly with the sweet breath of Spring. The odor of the damp soil rose to greet them and the robin and song sparrows chimed in with the forest music in a sympathetic love note.

"Oh, I love the woods!" she cried.

They had paused by an old stile that barred their way and the girl reached up to break off a dogwood bough as she spoke.

"Jetty," he began in a low tone, "do you know since I first saw you I've been a changed man? Since I first looked into your eyes and saw your pure young soul shining there, I have felt how aimless my life has been, how little I deserve the regard of a good woman. I look back over the dreary years and see nothing but a wilderness of wasted opportunities. I know nothing and have accomplished nothing. I am a worthless, good-for-nothing sort of fellow, not fit to breathe the same air with you—"

"Stop!" she cried, coming nearer with an impulsive gesture and gazing into his face.

"Stop! Don't abuse yourself! I love you!"
The slumbering soul had leaped into life and shone transfigured from the dark shadows in her eyes. He

gazed into them as if to fathom their mystery, and then he drew her in a close embrace and their lips met. There was a long silence.

Presently he led the way to a mossy bank under a leafy tree whose boughs shadowed a singing brook. He spread a newspaper on the ground for her and sat beside her. She had not spoken since her outburst of love, and sat with hanging head, still holding the dogwood blossom in her hand.

"Jetty," he whispered, as he attempted to draw her nearer, "my darling, my wife!"

But she drew away from him, and said:

- "Please forget what I said just now. I—I—didn't mean it, that is, I didn't intend to say it."
- "You ask me to forget what will be one of the sweetest memories of all my days, and I hope they will stretch into many long, happy years with you, Jetty, with you."
- "But I can't be your wife. We would never be happy together. I am a Christian and you are an infidel."
  - "Who told you that?"
  - "Mrs. Perkins."
- "That was like her. Why do you listen to any thing she says? She hates you and you don't know it."
  - "Why should she hate me?"
- "She is the sort of woman that hates beauty in any other woman. She is your enemy because you are her rival."
  - "How can I be her rival? Is she in love with you?"

The unconscious admission drew him nearer again. "No, but she is jealous of you on general principles. Have you ever noticed that every time you go into the room she's in to speak to Brown who sits near her; she never lets you do it in peace, but always interrupts your conversation in some way? Well, that is her attitude toward almost every man in the bureau and toward every attractive woman. She can't bear to see any man insensible to her charms, not even a fellow like Brown. That is why she tries to turn you against me, just to get even with me for admiring you the most."

- "Then what she said was false?"
- "It was not true, and not exactly false, either. I am not an infidel, but I can't say I believe in the Bible. I don't say there is no God, but I do say that I don't know whether there is or not. I have no convictions; I simply don't know. I wish I did."
  - "I suppose you are an agnostic."
- "I was brought up in an orthodox atmosphere and under the most rigid discipline. I was made to memorize the answers to the questions in the catechism, a lot of meaningless words then, nor do they mean more to me now, for that matter. My faith was tried by the severest tests possible to human experience, I'll tell you about it all some day, but not now, and it did not bear the test. I first lost confidence in man and that finally led to a loss of all faith in God. If God is an all-wise Creator, why did he bring humanity into being only to toil and suffer, and then fix a

penalty for wrong doing, which it is impossible to avoid? If he is so kind and good, how can he punish us throughout all eternity?"

He paused, looking keenly at the girl, who sat pale and silent at his side, toying nervously with the white dogwood flower, her eyes filled with tears.

"You have brought me a new message and put another meaning to the unsolved riddle of my life. I believe in you more than I do myself, and if it were possible to restore my old faith——"

She interrupted him with a passionate gesture.

"And if you believe in me you surely believe in my religion too. It is a part of myself. It has made me what I am, such as that is. Without faith in God I don't believe that I could live. If I didn't know that my Redeemer liveth—— But how can I argue with you?

At any rate you must admit that without the Christian religion the world would be chaos. The very laws of the country, the government itself, is all based on the principles laid down in the Bible."

"I'm not opposed to Christianity, you understand. I don't object to it in other people. It is a very beautiful thing when one sees the genuine article."

Both were silent for a while and the tinkling of a cow bell came from beyond the stile and mingled with the singing water at their feet. Presently he leaned nearer and looked into her face until she was forced to meet his gaze.

"When I look into your eyes I know there is a heaven somewhere."

She turned away and hung her head and blushed.

- "And when you frown I know there is a hell."
- "And yet you don't believe that God is love?" she returned.
  - "No, but I know that love is God."

And he clasped her in his arms again. She could not resist his logic or his ardor.

"You believe in an all-wise Providence, do you not?" he continued, as her head drooped on his shoulder and her dark hair brushed his cheek. "If there is such a thing, I think Providence must have designed you to lead me back to my old faith, and sent you to me to bring me back to the light, to save my soul, if I have one. Would you desert me now and leave me to sink back into a worse state of unbelief than the first? Oh, Jetty, if you do discard me, take time for reflection, before you send me to perdition. If you can love me and still give me up—"

"I can't! I can't!" she panted, "I will never give you up!"

And her lips returned his kiss in the blissful fervor of a devotion that embraced all the phases of a pure woman's passion, the gentle solicitude of a sister, the reverence of a dutiful daughter, the unself-ishness of a mother, with its all protecting care, the joy of a faithful young wife, proud in the possession of a strong man's love. And Kimball, glowing with ardor, flushed with the ecstasy of victory, sat

holding her soft white hand, his tender gray eyes so full of love that she blushed to meet them, his voice tremulous with emotion at the thought that she was really his own. But he did not mention marriage, fearing to frighten her again. He asked her when she first began to love him and she was ashamed to answer, for it had sprung into being when she first read the tender admiration in his glance. He asked her why it was she had striven to conceal her love and kept him on the anxious seat, at which question she was a little surprised, not knowing how well she had dissembled, or how delicate are the sensitive scales which measure passion.

- "Say, it must be growing late!" she cried at last. He looked at his watch.
- "Would you believe it was six o'clock? And I've kept you here all this time without any dinner. You've eaten nothing since breakfast, have you?"
  - "No, but I'm not hungry."
- "Neither am I, but we must eat something. We'll go back to town and get dinner somewhere. What do you say?"

And so their sweet communion was prolonged a few more hours, and ere he left her at the door he murmured:

"This has been the shortest, sweetest, happiest day of my life."

And she replied:

"Until to-morrow."

## CHAPTER XVIII

#### FAREWELL

The next day was disagreeable and gloomy, but the sun shone in Jetty's heart and reflected its beams in her face as her busy fingers flew joyfully over the typewriter keys. Kimball was in no mood for work. He labored and blotted and erased all the morning, wondering how she could bear up so much better than he under the great wonder of their love. His eyes sought her face constantly, and sometimes she would glance up at him with a shy, sweet smile, but they had scarcely spoken to each other all the morning and Jones began to wonder if it was all over. Stupid Jones!

Once when they were alone Kimball went over to her desk and said:

"Don't go out to lunch until half past one. I want to go with you."

Soon after this Jetty quietly moved her paper bag of lunch from its conspicuos position on the window sill to a remote corner of a drawer out of sight. The minutes seemed to stretch into hours, but at last it was half past one and Jetty demurely put on her hat and walked down the corridor past Kimball, who stood talking to Jermyn. Kimball quickly closed the interview though, and turned to walk out with her. He had his hat in his hand and their walking out together seemed a mere accident.

He had looked forward to this tête à tête all the morning, but now he was silent and troubled. The moment he joined her she knew something was wrong, so well does the fine instinct of love read love. She did most of the talking this time, endeavoring to dissipate his anxious mood. As they sat waiting for lunch she told him a funny story of her little brother Jack, and his face relaxed somewhat by the time the soft shell crabs appeared. But he could not eat.

- "Jetty, I've heard bad news," he said at last, yielding to her subtle sympathy, "that is, bad news for me; you may not mind."
- "Then it's bad news for me, too," she said very softly and he wished they were back again on the mossy bank all alone with the singing water at their feet.
- "I've got to go away on another inspection tour. Jermyn handed me the order just now. I have to report in Chicago next Tuesday."
  - "One week."
- "Yes, one more week," and their eyes met with a lingering fondness.
- "How long will you be away?" she asked, as she looked down at her plate.
- "I don't know; I never do know just how long I'm to be gone, but it will be at least a month, perhaps longer. I will manage somehow to come back in a month anyway, if possible. How can I stay away that long? I used to look forward to these trips, but now—Say, why can't you go with me?

We can just step around to the parsonage and be married without any fuss and feathers, you wouldn't care for that sort of thing, would you? and then go on to Chicago on our wedding trip. What do you say?"

But she would not hear of it. She had not yet confided the great secret to her mother and she could not think of marrying without her mother's blessing. He spent the whole week in persuasion and made every effort to induce her to yield to his wish, but she was firm. They were together every afternoon and evening and lunched together almost every day for the whole week and he had ample opportunity to present his arguments.

"I love you but I cannot," she would cry with her eyes full of tears. But she promised to marry him sometime soon after his return, and ere he went he placed a ring on her finger as a token of that promise.

It was late Sunday evening when they parted at her door. He was to leave on an early train next morning.

- "Just one week ago to-day since you told me that you loved me," he said.
- "Just one week ago," she echoed, "you told me good-bye here on these very steps."
  - "It has been the shortest week of my life."
  - "I hope the month will be short also."
- "Jetty, promise me that whatever happens, you will always be true to me?"
- "I will love you always in death itself and afterwards, my love."

All his life he remembered her as she looked that night with a white summer gown that gave an added softness to her cheek and eye, some filmy fabric draped about her shoulders, revealing and half concealing the dainty curves of throat and bosom, the dark waves of hair rippling back from her brow, and some little curls in front that fluttered coyly in the summer wind.

In his dreams sleeping or waking, her voice would come to him, soft and tremulous with its passion so pure, generous and womanly, and yet so deep, fervent and overwhelming, as it murmured:

"I will love you always, in death itself and afterwards, my love."

From the windows of a house next door came the sound of a popular song.

"Do you know what air that is?" asked Kimball. "It is 'My Only Heaven Is in Thine Eyes."

The next day Jones was acting Chief of the Correspondence Division and all the light was gone from her life. One short week brought a world of realities.

### CHAPTER XIX

### THE MERIT SYSTEM

The basin on the east bank of the Potomac, stretching from the mouth of the Anacostia River on the south to the highlands on the north, said territory comprising the City of Washington, has long been known as the valley of humiliation for the disappointed office seeker. It is also the slough of despond for many who succeed in obtaining Government positions, more especially those appointed by the Civil Service Commission and who have no influential friends.

With the Civil Service law and the establishment of what is called the merit system in the Departments, began the era of multitudinous petty and arbitrary rules. Before that time, Government clerks enjoyed the same privileges as those employed by private concerns and were not subjected to discipline very much like that of children in a graded school. Only since then do we hear of the zealous chief of division who visits the house of a clerk reported to be sick and insists upon seeing the patient in order to verify the truth of the report; who suspends a clerk for a month without pay for being seen during office hours looking into the pages of a magazine; who forbids all conversation in the rooms during office hours, even when demanded in

the transaction of necessary business; who makes it a misdemeanor for the men to smoke, and makes a rule forbidding the ladies to go in pairs or in groups to the toilet rooms.

As these rules were not considered necessary before the enactment of the law of 1883, it appears that the lines are drawn more severely as a result of foisting upon the Departments a lot of civil service appointees in place of political allies appointed by influence alone. As these rules are arbitrarily enforced, falling heaviest upon the clerk known to have no political influence, they appear to be designed to suppress the civil service clerk or those not of the proper or existing political faith as represented by the administration. erly a chief of division was supposed to have the status of a clerk in charge and to perform clerical duties. Of late years his duties have deteriorated into those of a spy, who reports not to the Secret Service Bureau, but to the superiors in his own office, the results of his espionage upon the clerks who serve under him.

The Departments of the Government are divided into bureaus; these are subdivided into divisions, and over each division is placed the clerk in charge known as division chief. Each bureau has also a chief clerk who has direct supervision over all the clerks in the bureau, and no clerk can communicate with the head of the bureau or higher officials excepting through the chief clerk. Unless the clerk has influential friends or has the faculty of making

friends of his official superiors, it is practically impossible for him to succeed; that is, to receive substantial recognition of his services in the form of It is absolutely necessary in order to promotion. be recommended for promotion to make friends with his division chief or the chief clerk. These two officials are often small politicians with petty minds and elastic consciences and, secure in their places under civil service law, do not hesitate to use any opportunity afforded by their position to gratify personal spite or preference, where it can be done without detriment to themselves. The average minor official of this character will fawn upon inferiors whom he knows have powerful friends and gratify his malice toward those without friends, in a thousand petty persecutions. The clerk without political friends will get the lowest salary on the rolls and will have to do the most work. be given the most objectionable work to do. officials as these will multiply rules of conduct for the purpose of entrapping their victims; they will spy upon these unfortunates and question the messengers in order to bring petty charges against such clerks, and will continually reprimand these clerks for trivial misdemeanors which others more fortunate may commit unreproved. These are the officials who in order to make their footing more secure, modify their political views to accord with each change of administration.

They are careful to make friends in both the great political parties, so that in addition to the law

which protects them, their positions are made more secure by influence.

The law requires that no clerk shall be dismissed without specific charges being preferred against him, a copy of these charges shown him, and an opportunity given him to reply to them. enough, where a chief of division is inclined to prejudice, to so aggravate the feelings of a subordinate by all kinds of arbitrary rulings and a biased enforcement of them, to drive him to some word or act which can be construed as offensive. calls the clerk to account, and unless the clerk has powerful control over himself he may be driven to further complaint of unfair treatment, and if his manner is the least defiant or self-assertive, he will be reported for insubordination. This alone is ground The charges are preferred, a copy for dimissal. shown the clerk; he answers them in as respectful a vein as he can assume, and unless he can bring to bear some strong influence in his favor, he is promptly discharged. An examination of the annual reports of the Civil Service Commission will show that in no case has this written answer of a clerk in reply to the specific charges ever availed anything. It is all done apparently according to the letter of the law but not its spirit. The chief clerks and division chiefs hold the whip hand by virtue of their influence as well as by authority of the law. In case the clerk is careful not to allow himself to be provoked into anything capable of being construed into an act of insubordination, there are a thousand ways in

which he may be persecuted and made to feel the petty spite of his superiors. All mistakes in the work will be blamed upon him, whether committed by him or not, and will be used against him when the average standing for the quarter is made up. The hours at which he comes and goes to his work will be watched more closely than any other clerk, and if he is as much as two minutes late in the morning he will have to lose an hour's leave, or perhaps a half day. He will have to do the most disagreeable work, and perhaps more work will be required of him.

It is thus seen that the civil service law does not protect the clerk any further than a continuance in official position for a time. It appoints him and leaves him to hoe his own row. It is powerless to insure him impartial treatment. He would not even be sure of keeping his position without influence, if it were possible for his superiors to appoint another of their own choosing in his place, and this fact alone insures some degree of permanency. If he does not happen to please his superiors they will soon let him see it. If he retaliates as a free-born American, having the ordinary rights of a citizen, he is lost.

Many things are said in Congress and elsewhere, many things published in newspapers and magazines regarding the civil service clerk. Every other year the agitation breaks out afresh in Congress and more false ideas are put forth and mistaken notions advanced in regard to the Government clerk

# 174 The Other Side of the Story

than any other of the working classes. He is little understood because he dares not speak for himself. He is not allowed free speech; he is forbidden to criticise his superiors under pain of dismissal, and as dismissal usually means disgrace and renders other employment more difficult to obtain, he keeps silent, though smarting all the while under the sting of slander and misrepresentation,—the falsity of reports which gain credence where better information should be expected.

He is in suspense at every other session of Congress when the members while away the tedium of a long session by talking of reducing the force of employees, reducing their salaries, compelling them to pay an annual stipend to pension their superannuated fellow clerks, lengthening the working hours, making threats of investigation and reorganization, and instead of carrying out any of their threats, often end by increasing the Departmental appropriations so that the favored clerks may have a promotion in salary. Of course the clerk keeps silent, at first from fear, then in hope of a share in the extra appropriation, and finally, because he dares not do He has no rights. He cannot protect otherwise. He is a much maligned, badly treated, himself. misunderstood individual.

A certain official once contributed an article to a certain periodical which contained passages reflecting on the efficiency of the civil service appointee. In it he makes the statement that the force of temporary clerks chosen by himself without the aid of the

Civil Service Commission were better clerks than the ones whom he found already in the bureau, and from this fact he drew the conclusion that the clerks appointed by the Civil Service Commission were less efficient than those selected by individual choice. Had he investigated the real conditions in the very bureau of which he wrote, he would have found that not more than about one-sixth of the original force were appointed through the Commission, having entered the service in other ways, some by original classification, some by the various "blanket orders" issued from time to time by the Chief Executive. others by remaining on the temporary roll long enough to entitle them to classification. In other words, his comparison was made between two sets of clerks both of which had been appointed through influence, and quite naturally the fresh, younger clerks could do more work in a given time than the older ones, though it is hardly probable that even the official who had appointed them could claim that the new clerks did not make more mistakes than the old ones. At any rate, no disinterested mind could possibly draw from this incident the conclusion that the clerk appointed through the Civil Service Commission is inferior in any way to one chosen by the head of a bureau or appointed through influence The article is an unjust and untrue reflection on the civil service clerk who cannot retaliate or explain. It is only one of the many misrepresentations concerning him which continually find their way into print.

176

The main question with the average Department official, whose duty it is to enforce the civil service law, seems to be how to evade that law. Even when the official is himself protected by that law, he will not hesitate to use any available method of getting round it if by so doing he can exercise individual preference. A story is told of one official but recently appointed and anxious to secure places for his friends, who issued an order that all clerks who could not do four pounds of work daily should be Upon finding that no one had fallen below this daily average, he issued another order requiring five pounds daily. These officials have, for the most part, ceased to ask the Commission to certify the names of women for appointment, usually inserting the term "male eligibles" in their request. This is not because they object to women in the service, but because they prefer to select the women.

When it is remembered that the average woman examined by the Civil Service Commission is young, fresh from school, and untried in the ways of the world, it strikes one as an intervention of Providence that she rarely has an opportunity for appointment. The division chief and chief clerk, to her mind, take the place of her masters at school, the high school principal, or the Sabbath school teacher, and she looks up to him accordingly. They are sometimes flattered by this rather than annoyed, and a mutual respect and good will is established which may or may not result to the girl's advantage. It may also happen that the official is worthy of this

esteem in every way, for not all of them are disposed to be unjust.

When a girl of this character, appointed through the Civil Service Commission, having no influence to help her, finds that all her efforts to please her superiors avails nothing, unless she profits by the example of many of the women clerks around her, the kind of women who, since the days of General Spinner, have given a bad name to the female Government clerk,—the knowledge always brings a shock of surprise. Our young women are brought up so thoroughly imbued with the importance of the cardinal virtues to womanhood, that no matter how much she may have heard previously concerning these same female clerks, it is hard for her to realize that she must be punished under the present order of things for her virtue's sake. She must endure constant association with ladies whom at home it would be improper for her to know. She must close her eyes to official intrigues conducted so boldly that it is surprising how few result in public scandal. She is fortunate if she can gain simply the good will of her superiors and so avoid unjust discrimination in a negative sort of way. It is true that many of these young women clerks can overcome prejudice by judicious tact, or artful flattery, and the myriad feminine artifices in which the sex is so adept. But if she shows undue self-reliance or a too independent spirit, they will not hesitate to humiliate her. Neither her sex, her youth, nor her sacred innocence will protect her. If for instance she finds

a woman clerk known to be her inferior in ability is promoted above her, or marked above her for promotion, she may ask for some redress or explanation. This is a foolish thing to do, but it is often done by the young clerk who has not yet learned that she must not criticise her superiors. Looking up to the chief clerk as she might her old high school principal, she takes it for granted that his morals are similarly above reproach. She goes to him saying that she has done her work faithfully and expected a better showing, and why does she not deserve promotion also? She will probably be told that promotions are always made "for the good of the service," a term used to explain many questionable rewards and punishments. One young woman, in fact, was told by an official to whom she had made inquiries regarding a certain appointment, that such places were obtained "by kissing and favor."

It is not an unusual occurrence in the Government service under the merit system for one woman to be marked higher and promoted above others who do far more work, and do it far better, who keep all the petty, arbitrary, annoying rules, for only the favored few dare to break them. It is a common saying that the lower one's salary the more one is required to do. The woman in favor is usually given the easiest desk, for there is a vast difference in the character of the various classes of work. Is all this a credit to the Government of a land of free people? Are we going back to the manners of the French court under the Grand Monarch when all the world courted in-

trigue and corruption and so-called noblemen made a jest of virtue? Who would have suspected one hundred years ago that the morning of the twentieth century would see the seal of the official approval of our Government put upon vice, nay, upon crime?

Is this fair treatment for the mothers thrown upon their own resources who come to the Government for honest employment? Is it a suitable atmosphere for the young women who come, all pure and fair and unsuspecting, in the hope of helping a dependent family?

I repeat, it is wisdom which has led the Departments of recent years to practically cease asking the Civil Service Commission to certify the names of women. But is it the part of wisdom to allow so many women to enter without any examination every time the appointment door is opened by Congress or by Executive order? If they really prefer male clerks, why at such times are more women employed than men?

In these days it is more creditable for a woman's name to be at the bottom of the efficiency report than at the top.

#### CHAPTER XX

## JERMYN THE TERRIBLE, AND OTHERS

How dreary the world seemed next day! The brightness and gladness of Spring glowed over the beautiful earth, but its sunbeams failed to gladden Jetty's heart. To one who loves much, absence is like the darkness of a dark night, for if the sun of love be set there is no moon to reflect its radiance. Yet she strove to appear as usual. Not for worlds would she let any one suspect how much she missed him. She was glad when Mr. Coburn brought her some special work which kept her very busy all the morning. Work is the best panacea for human ills. She was still at work about one o'clock when Coburn came in and said:

"Are you still pounding away like that? You haven't had any lunch, have you? Come on out to lunch with me."

She paused in some confusion and tried to stammer a refusal.

"Oh, nonsense! You can't work without eating, you know. Besides, I want to make amends for working you so hard."

Taken by surprise, her very diffidence led her to make her first mistake. She went with him to lunch.

On the way out she glanced at him in his immacu-

late suit of white linen. She noticed that his new tie of the latest shade of blue was on a level with her shoulder. His Panama was of a marvelous but fashionable shape.

- "Well, do you miss him very much?" asked Coburn, as he leaned forward across the little table after the waiter had departed with the order.
- "Miss whom?" she asked with illy concealed agitation.
- "I haven't given you much time to miss anybody, though, have I? You ought to thank me for my consideration. Let me tell you something worth knowing," he continued after a pause, "you shouldn't take the trouble to worry over any man living. Not one of us is worth it."
  - "Do I look so worried?"

She looked up at him at last.

- "Oh, I didn't mean that exactly. Besides, any change in your face, you know, is only another variation in your beauty."
  - "You flatter me," she said, trying to smile.
- "Oh, no I don't. I never flatter. Whatever I say is the truth. I meant just what I said. Is it possible that you don't know that you are beautiful?"
  - "Oh, please-" the girl began.
- "Do you mean to say that Kimball never took the trouble to tell you so? Then he's slower than I thought he was."

Here the arrival of the waiter interfered with further conversation for a time.

# 182 The Other Side of the Story

"Aren't you hungry? You're not eating anything. Come, this won't do. Have another caviare."

And poor Jetty made a brave effort to appear hungry.

"Here, waiter," he cried, "bring a dish of ice cream. I never saw a girl yet that wouldn't take ice cream."

It was the most profuse and elegant luncheon that the girl had ever tasted, but it was also the most uncomfortable. On the way back to the office he remarked:

- "Take my advice, Miss Jetty, don't take any man's absence to heart. There are lots of fine girls in Chicago, you know."
  - "Certainly."
- "And there are plenty of fellows here ready to take Kimball's place."
- "His place?" She was thinking of his official position.
- "And among the first bidders, do me the honor to count your humble servant," he lifted his hat and bowed as they separated, and it was not until some minutes after reaching her desk that the full intent of his possible meaning flashed over her.
- "But it can't be possible," she murmured. "I'm mistaken, of course. He is a married man."

But he gave her no time to reflect. For some reason he deemed it necessary to exercise personal supervision over the work upon which she was engaged, and he was often at her desk in the course of the afternoon, suggesting, revising, changing and correcting the copy. It was the same thing next morning, but when at one o'clock he asked her out to luncheon again, she refused very politely, saying that she had already lunched.

"Then you won't come with me?"

She met his eye with the fearless courage of unconscious honesty, but something in his gaze made her shudder, she scarce knew why.

It was the same thing next day and the next, but on the third refusal he remarked:

"Then you don't intend to go out to lunch with me any more?"

He was the chief clerk, her superior officer and she knew not how to reply.

"Now, Miss Jetty, you know I mean no harm in the world. I want to be your friend. I'm afraid you don't realize what you're doing. Maybe you don't know how much I could help you if I have the mind."

Still she sat silent with downcast eyes.

"I would like to know," he went on after pausing in vain for a reply, "what you meant by going out with me in the first place if you're afraid to do it again."

He did not see the flash in her eyes as she looked up at his departing form. It was like the sudden light of an explosion which for a moment suffuses all the beauties of nature with its terrible glare.

Next morning when she reached the office she found on her desk an official order relieving her of

her duties in the correspondence division and commanding her to report at once to the recording division. This was the branch in charge of Mr. Jermyn. The order was signed by Coburn and above his signature were the words: "By order of the Seventh Auditor of the Treasury." There was no appeal.

All the clerks gathered round her commiseratingly. Jermyn's was the hardest worked division of the whole bureau, his clerks were subjected to a system of espionage that compromised their self-respect. They were not allowed to leave the rooms without permission from him; if a clerk was three minutes late in the morning, no matter the cause, the clerk lost a whole hour's leave. Also, he was a memorandum fiend, and every little friction with his clerks was made a pretext for writing a memorandum reporting the circumstance to the chief clerk. He often made a memorandum of the time a clerk spent away from his desk and would reprimand him for it regardless of the fact that the clerk had been occupied on some official errand.

"He keeps everybody in hot water all the time," they told her.

"But Mrs. Perkins is in the halls a great deal," said Jetty, "perhaps he isn't so hard on the lady clerks."

Her sympathizing fellow clerks looked knowingly at one another but said nothing. She soon realized that her sudden and unsought transfer was equivalent to disgrace.

She was placed at a desk beside Mrs. Perkins, who

greeted her effusively. The lady had just returned from a few weeks' leave and was running over with seaside gossip and jokes from the boardwalk. Jetty's typewriting machine was brought in and adjusted on the desk while she brought over the necessary implements and belongings from her old desk. It would be all right when Mr. Kimball returned, she thought, as she pressed her hand to her bosom where she kept his ring fastened to a piece of ribbon which she wore round her neck.

Jermyn laid a great batch of work on her desk and went back to his own desk without giving her any instructions. She turned to ask of Mrs. Perkins some necessary questions and that lady launched forth into a detailed mass of information not very explicit or to the point.

"But what I want to know is this," began Jetty, but she was interrupted by the violent ringing of a bell on Jermyn's desk, which meant "silence!" He was writing a memorandum to the chief clerk and any noise disturbed him.

She went on with the work as best she could after that and stayed at her desk so steadily that her fingers grew tired and her arms ached. Once she paused to rest her head on her hand and Mrs. Perkins turned to regard her with a supercilious smile and Jermyn, missing the noise of the typewriting machine, came to bring her a fresh batch of work. Then she began to realize that she was expected to go on and on and on like an everlasting machine, without pausing to think, or to rest a moment, all under the eyes of this

terrible man. She thought of that other man, so gentle, kind and thoughtful, and her eyes filled with She began to write faster than ever then, tears. although the copy was blurred and the keys were floating in a crystal sea. The work upon which she was now engaged was of the same grade as that done by Mrs. Perkins. It was an example which is familiar to the employees of the Departmental serv-An excellent clerk, capable of better things, is disciplined for some fancied offense by being placed upon inferior work side by side with an office favorite, who is incompetent to do anything better. is needless to add that the incompetent favorite is usually paid the higher salary.

Once the chief clerk came in and stood beside her for a moment before she saw him, so preoccupied was she as she worked off her overcharged feelings on the typewriter at a surprising rate of speed.

"Well, how do you like it over here?" he asked, and as she looked up he saw the lovely eyes glittering with tears and the tender mouth drooping at the corners. He glowed with admiration. What a clipper she was! Here was genuine beauty in genuine distress. Well, let her come to him for redress. That was exactly what he wanted. In a moment, however, her face resumed its natural expression and she replied to his query:

"Oh, I'm quite willing to do anything that is wanted of me."

"If they don't treat you right, just you come to me," he said in what he meant to be soothing tones. She ate her cold lunch at her desk in company with Mrs. Perkins, who entertained her with unique advice, full of a worldly philosophy that was all new to the girl and made her wonder if the world had all gone wrong, or if it could be the same world she had known in Corinth.

"I tell you," said Mrs. Perkins, "if I was young again like you, if I wouldn't use those brown eyes to advantage. Mercy me! You've heard of Senator Kipple, haven't you, the millionaire of the Senate? Well, I know a young widow who didn't know him at all, but she went to see him and was so sweet and charming and lovely that she just won him over completely, and do you know, he gave her passes for herself and daughter all over the West? and she didn't even have to ask him for them, either. She just knew how to use her eyes to advantage, that was all. A woman's success in office is all a question of eyes, anyway, and the sooner you learn how to use them the better."

Daily side talks like these falling upon the soil imbedded from early youth with the stale old Puritan platitudes, beautiful in their very truth, acted for the time like the crimson blast of a simoon on the flowers of honor, virtue and modesty that blossomed in her heart. They shrunk and withered for the time but did not die.

The day of her transfer to the recording division came during one of those cold spells which sometimes come after a spell of warm weather in early summer. Her desk was within full range of the electric fan which Jermyn turned on early in the morning. As she wore a cotton shirt waist, she sat shivering for a while in the strong current of air, but finally mustered up courage enough to ask him to please turn it off. He agreed gruffly enough, and she was comfortable for the rest of that day. But the following day was very much warmer and she would have been glad to have the fan going, but Jermyn did not allow it to be turned on. Also, he kept the windows tightly closed in deference to her wishes of the day before, and everybody in the room was perspiring. This was how she discovered that it was a crime to presume to express any desire as to the temperature of the room. That was regulated by Jermyn alone and no one else dared to touch the windows or the fan. She made no comment on the temperature of the room after that, but tried to adjust her clothing in accordance with his whims. She took a cold the first day that the second day's experience did not improve. It caused her to go home ill a few days later.

She had been in the recording division about three days when one afternoon about half past three a messenger came in distributing a number of large envelopes among the various clerks. All save Jetty received one in the room where she sat. As soon as Mrs. Perkins opened hers she gave a shriek of delight and leaned back, pounding her desk with her fist in her joy. It was a notice of her promotion to fourteen hundred dollars a year. Mr. Jermyn was promoted to eighteen hundred dollars a year. While

the majority of the envelopes seemed to bring joy, there were some which were received in silence with blanched faces and tightening lips. One quiet. sweet-voiced little woman was notified of a reduction in salary from fourteen hundred to nine hundred dol-She had been in the service twenty-five years, the very best years of her life, her hair had grown white and her heart old, and her hands not quite so skillful as formerly, nor her feet so nimble, nor her eyesight quite so good, perhaps, and yet there was not a more conscientious, painstaking clerk in the This lady went immediately to ask of the chief clerk if her reduction in salary was due to any neglect or want of application to her duties, and she was assured by him with his most gallant manner that he had no complaint whatever to make of her' either as to her method of work, or the amount she performed, and that what had been done was done "for the good of the service." She went back to her desk, where she resumed the same duties as before, with a careworn face and a sick heart. Modest merit is below par in Uncle Sam's civil rank and The Mrs. Perkins who know how to use their eyes always triumph in the end.

The evening papers bore an account of the changes in the office of the Seventh Auditor, with the explanation that they had been made "for the good of the service."

One of those who received an envelope was an old man with whitening hair. Jetty recognized him as the man whose name was the only one that stood below hers on the efficiency list. The paper trembled in his hand as he came into the room to speak to Jermyn. His face was livid with rage.

"D—n you!" he cried, and broke forth into a torrent of abuse mixed with oaths.

"It's my turn now! I can tell you what I think of you without being marked down for it, you infernal, low-born beggar! You've dismissed me because I've been careful enough of my savings to invest in some business outside and refused to lend my money to you. You're a living argument for the existence of a personal devil! Contemptible, conceited, cowardly, low-down bully! Kicked out because I've grown old and am thrifty enough to be prepared for the blow! You know very well that my son carries on my outside business. Where's your son, I'd like to know? You've got him into the Government service against the civil service You're guilty of nepotism and if I don't report it to the Secretary of the Treasury! You'll see! Here, take your paper!"

He threw the envelope into Jermyn's face and flung himself out of the room. Jermyn had sat surprised and stunned by the sudden onslaught, but jumped to his feet as the paper struck his face and rushed toward the door.

"Does he think I'm afraid of him?" he blustered.

But the door was barred by friendly arms and the dismissed man was out of the building.

At the end of her first week in the recording divi-

sion Jermyn had occasion to examine some of Jetty's work for the first time. He immediately called her to his desk.

- "Now, don't that look just like the work of a woman?" he roared, "how can I tell anything about the papers without the numbers? And why didn't you leave a proper margin? How in the world am I to have these filed in the boxes with the other records when they do not correspond?"
- "You gave me no instructions, and I could not ask for any," she replied, as soon as she could get in a word, "so I had to do the best I could."
- "Your own judgment might have told you better than that."
- "But I'm not supposed to use my own judgment. I simply tried to make the record according to the previous records which I had seen. I had nothing else to go by."
  - "Why didn't you ask some one?" he thundered.
- "I did and you rang the bell for me to stop talking."
- "Isn't that just like a woman?" he exclaimed again, as he spread the papers out before him. "This won't do at all. I'll have to report you for insubordination."
- "I will make any corrections necessary," she said, brokenly, for something choked her utterance, but he waived her away. She went back to her work choking with sobs and all the day the copy was blurred and the keys floated in a crystal sea.

That afternoon at five o'clock, for the recording

division was working extra hours, she went to see the chief clerk, to ask him to send her back to her old desk in the correspondence division, but when she attempted to speak she could not do so, try as she would. Finally she gave way to tears and stood sobbing before him.

"Come, sit down, now, and tell me all about it," he said. "I wonder what she thinks I'm made of," he thought, "she must know I'm human. Tears only make her more lovely still."

"I didn't intend to give way to tears," she stammered, "I hope I'm not trespassing on your time. I know its showing unpardonable weakness to cry, but I really can't help it. I'm not doing it for effect and I hope you won't take my tears into consideration at all. I realize that I'm supposed to be on the same footing as a man from nine to four and I have no right to fall back on such cowardly weapons as tears. I want to ask you to please send me back to my old desk."

"But, my dear girl, how can I? Kimball isn't here to ask for you and besides they need you in Jermyn's division. You know you belonged there, really, when you came in, and it was thought to be for the good of the service to send you there finally. You saw the order, didn't you? It was done by order of the Auditor."

She knew, nevertheless, that it was all his own doing, but she dared not tell him so.

"And I know you love justice," she went on, and do what you think is best for the public serv-

ice always, but I tell you that when you send me to the recording division you are not doing for the best. I cannot do my best work there or stand it half so well as I could before."

He smiled, and rising from his desk, came round to her side.

"All because you had someone to make love to you before. Just let me take Kimball's place now, will you? I can make love quite as well as he." His crafty, insinuating smile revealed more to her than his words conveyed.

If the earth had opened at her feet she would not have been more alarmed. As she stood there, her color coming and going, trying to adjust herself to this new danger, her mind fast revolving what to do, what to say, the door opened and Mrs. Perkins entered.

- "May I use the telephone?" she asked, a little surprised to see Jetty.
- "Just think over what I've said and I guess you'll feel differently about all this to-morrow," he added, as he held open the door for her with his craftiest smile.

She did not dare to proclaim his infamy. She could not defy him. She would only make herself notorious and perhaps a laughing stock, and all for no purpose. What was she against the mighty hand that shielded this man? How could she, a friendless young girl, array herself against the whole intricate system that gave so much power to a chief clerk and made such intimidation possible? Was it

true that all honor and truth were gone from the world, that the lessons instilled at Corinth were only milk diet for the young which must be discarded later on for the tainted dishes of gilded sin? Her first impulse was to go to the Secretary of the Treasury himself with her story; she knew him to be upright and unbiased in his dealings, but she was entirely too timid to brave it out. Instead she went home and spent a sleepless night puzzling over all these things.

To the young girl, so full of faith in humanity, so imbued with the divinity of simple innocence, once so sweetly unconscious of danger, whose respect for the powers that be was founded on the belief that they are ordained of God, to her, the effect of sudden disillusion was almost disastrous. It was immediately visible in her bearing, her countenance. She went about as one dazed with a too sudden vision of hell. The swift change from the paradise of pure girlhood to the cruel wilderness of forbidden knowledge of evil aroused in her a dumb, nameless dread.

She could tell no one of her trouble, and in truth there was no one to tell. Miss Wilkins had just sailed on her long expected trip to Europe, and as for telling her story to Senator X, it would have made her die of shame. Besides, she had been to him earlier in the Spring with her complaint of unfairness in the efficiency report and the good man had gone to the Auditor and told him that his constitutent Miss Downing was required to do the same

class of work for nine hundred dollars for which other clerks received twelve hundred and fourteen hundred, and requested that the matter be looked The Auditor had called the attention of the chief clerk to the complaint of Senator X and then thought no more about it. The chief clerk looked up the record of Senator X and saw that he would soon be out of office and, as the Senator's political affiliations were opposed to those of the administration, Mr. Coburn felt at liberty to do as he pleased about it. He mended the matter by giving the girl a lower grade of work more fitted to a nine hundred dollar salary. It was a much heavier desk than her former one, she would be required to work harder to keep it up, but the character of the work was considered of a lower grade than the other desk. In other words, more work of its kind was required for nine hundred dollars than for twelve or fourteen hundred, and as she had complained of having a twelve hundred dollar desk at nine hundred, he turned tables and reversed the matter, without changing her salary.

On the day of her interview with the chief clerk, the bill containing the clause providing for his promotion was reported to the House from the Commitee on Appropriations.

#### CHAPTER XXI

# EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES MAY EXCUSE AN ANONYMOUS LETTER

Few things are more pathetic than the spectacle of a gentle young girl transplanted from the quiet atmosphere of home to one of restless striving and thrown upon the mercy of unscrupulous men and women. Too timid to complain even when she realized the extent of her grievance, too modest to even mention that she had been grossly insulted by the very person who should have been a friend to her, Jetty could only go to and fro about her tasks in a sort of mute apathy. She grew pale, and an unwonted glitter in her eyes foretold a thorough awakening.

In the rosy light of early morning Jetty arose from a sleepless pillow and wrote a letter to Roswell Kimball. It relieved her pent up feelings, though she could not tell him all the perfidy of the chief clerk. Coburn had rightly guessed that her extreme diffidence would stand him in good stead, and that from her very modesty she would not dare to expose him. Besides, she thought, when Mr. Kimball returned all would be well, and the rough places made easy for her by the strong hand of love.

She went back to her desk with restored equanimity, resolved that she would avoid Mr. Coburn's presence as much as possible. After all, she was comparatively safe from his persecution she thought, for she was not allowed to leave her desk without permission, and if he noticed that she avoided his room even when official business might have demanded her presence there, she had always a good excuse.

In the light of her knowledge of the chief clerk's character, and the very amicable relations existing between him and Mrs. Perkins, she was no longer in doubt as to the real nature of that lady, and the shock of this enlightenment not only wounded her self-respect, but was a severe blow to the normal repose of her mind. Compelled to sit beside her in close association on the work, feeling it a necessity to dissemble and mask her growing aversion from the fear of dismissal and disgrace, tortured by the very Puritan horror of this daily contact with one whom in Corinth she and all the elect would have spurned, feeling it necessary to listen quietly to advice that filled her with alarm, and coarse jests that disgusted her, small wonder that it affected her strength of body and mind, and made her lose all sense of proportion. She had always seen her own innocence reflected in every other woman, but now she stood face to face for the first time with vice.

Mrs. Perkins always wore black because it re-

vealed the stoutness of her figure less than any other color. With her smooth, white, silky hair and comely face, she made a handsome, dignified appearance, or would have done so had her manners corresponded. Every man who came into the room she would call over to her desk, unless he came of his own accord, and engage him in conversation. would ask him about his family, his wife, his child, his affairs generally, and seemed to know them all intimately. As a rule, she called the gentlemen by some familiar name, as Brownsey, Jonesey, Cobie and even Jermie. She never neglected an opportunity to attract their attention in some way. whole existence seemed to be an effort to be popular with the other sex, while she was not on speaking terms with half the lady clerks. There was one thing that struck Jetty with a new sense of horror, and that was Mrs. Perkins' apparent lack of any moral responsibility or conscience. Jetty had always thought of sin as connected in some way with repentance, but here it was dissembling before her with all the artless airs of innocence, and the lightness of heart which betokened a mind free from care. Nor was this lightness feigned. Hers was a nature whose sole ambition was to please the other sex, and she never grieved excepting when she failed to please; nor did she ever grieve long if another possible admirer appeared on her horizon.

One of her constant visitors was the chief clerk

himself, who would stand before her desk while talking with her, where he commanded a view of Jetty's face. This made it all the harder for the girl to bear with equanimity.

- "Well, how are the ladies this morning?" he asked on one of these visits, when he had found only the two ladies in the room.
- "Oh, about as usual," answered the ever ready Mrs. Perkins. "Miss Downing hasn't spoken for two hours."
  - "Maybe you didn't give her a chance."
- "Oh, yes, I did. She's such a model of propriety and virtue, you know."

He laughed, replying, with his eyes on Jetty's face.

- "You know the old platitude, 'virtue is its own reward?' Well, it's a mighty poor reward, isn't it?"
- "I'd rather have a promotion in salary any time," she replied glibly.

Jetty looking up, met his meaning glance and a great fear of him seized her as she comprehended his meaning. It required all the strength of her will to force herself to sit still and listen to this woman's heedless, inane, endless exposition of vanity and weakness. It was almost unendurable. She wanted to scream aloud. That day she applied for a week's leave. Before this she had been careful to save all her leave until her trip home, but she felt that her present need of it was so great that she could shorten her visit home when the time came.

At the end of the week she returned with her heart soothed and comforted by dreams of love and the hope for his early return, but before the day was over her last hope was gone, and she felt herself floating rudderless on a relentless sea. She had brought with her a letter from Kimball which she had received just as she left the house, and Mrs. Perkins, recognizing the handwriting, asked:

- "How is Mr. Kimball?"
- "He is well; that is, Mr. Jones has heard that he is well," answered Jetty as she concealed the letter in her desk.
  - "You know, I'm very much surprised at you."
  - " Why?"
- "Oh, you're a girl of such high principle. You say 'what God has joined together, let not man put asunder,' and yet here you are corresponding with a married man."
  - "Married!" The word died on her lips.
- "Yes; in your eyes he's married, although according to the law he is divorced."

The girl looked at her searchingly, but was afraid to trust herself to speak.

- "Are you sure of this?" she asked at last.
- "My dear, everybody knows it but you, and I thought you knew it too. It's no secret. I don't see why he kept it from you, though men are all gay deceivers, you know, my dear."

Her very soul died within her. Her last earthly

refuge was gone. But she could not stop to think of it now, under the eyes of this hateful, bantering woman.

"Oh, I've lived long enough to learn all that," she replied with a forced laugh as she leaned over her desk to hide the tears that came in spite of all effort. All day the copy was blurred and the keys floated in a crystal sea. But she would not doubt his sincerity on this woman's word alone. Later on, she found some official errand that took her into the correspondence division, and while there she remarked to Jones in what she meant to be a careless tone:

"Oh, yes, do you know anything of Mr. Kimball's wife; I mean his divorced wife? Some one said she is still living."

Jones looked at her keenly. His was not a suspicious nature, but this was a singular question for Miss Downing to ask.

"Oh, yes, she's still living. She's married to another man, I believe, and living in New York." The words rang in her ears all day.

She felt herself floating further out on the relentless sea while the far-off arms of love beckoned her back to a dangerous shore. No! no! she would be no better than the woman at her side. What was any principle worth that could not bear its test? There was only one way and that was the way of virtue. Love was a fine thing; she was willing to die for it, so much in love was she—anything but sacrifice her honor. Abraham in the land of Moriah did no sublimer thing than poor love-lorn Jetty Downing that day when, distracted with love, she renounced it voluntarily and unquestioningly for a principle which was a part of her simple, girlish faith. Love like hers, with its pagan fierceness attuned to Christian gentleness, its Oriental passion refined to a noble purity, could not renounce its object without a struggle, long and desperate, though silent.

As soon as the slow hand of the office clock pointed to four, she hurried homeward pale of face, with features set, her bosom heaving, the tears gathering. Straight up the stairway into her room she walked without pausing, locked the door carefully and then flung herself face downward on the floor, convulsed with sobs. At first she was inclined to blame him for deceiving her, but she remembered his reference to some sad chapter in his past. He had not meant to deceive her, but had simply never realized how literally she interpreted all the commands of the If she could have believed that he had meant to deceive her all along, it would have been easier to renounce him. But she knew him to be as honest and steadfast as herself. He had his faults. of course; he had been a little wild, perhaps. had known such men even in Corinth who had sown their wild oats and then settled down to a respectable citizenship. Kimball had not meant to deceive her, she felt sure of that. "What God hath joined

together" did not mean to him what it did to her, that was all. The law of the land had freed him, and according to that law he was at liberty to take another wife. It was perfectly plain if one could be satisfied with the law of the land alone, and regarded not that higher law of "let not man put asunder."

It is one thing to live uprightly in a placid atmosphere in which a strict interpretation of the moral code incurs no sacrifice and brings comparatively no temptations with it. It is another thing when temptation comes in such alluring guise that it is almost impossible to call it a sin, when a subtle, irresistible fascination overwhelms for the time all reason, when the tide of nature surges and beats against the barrier of principle and shakes its very foundation. Why not? she asked herself many times. She loved this man of all men in the world so fearlessly and so faithfully; he loved her as she knew she could never be loved again, as he would probably never love again. Perhaps God's hand was not in that other union of his; perhaps God meant them for each other after all. Ah! if she could only persuade herself to believe it!

"O God, have mercy and give me strength to bear it!" she panted in her anguish.

For a long time she lay oblivious to the sounds that floated up from the street through the open window. It grew dark and still she lay, her frame shaken with sobs, until from very exhaustion she lay quiet with closed and swollen eyes. At last she became conscious of the music of a popular song that came up from a street organ below her window. It was "My Only Heaven Is in Thine Eyes." With a cry she arose and shut the window, and in her agony of remembrance put her fingers to her ears endeavoring to shut out the sounds. Then she fell back in a chair shaken with sobs again.

In the weakness of her extremity of sorrow she turned as a tired child to the first comforter of her little woes. She would write at once to her mother and ask if she might come home to stay. She would have to leave Washington as soon as possible. It would never do to see Roswell Kimball again. She would do anything else for a living now; she was willing to go out to service, or work in the fields, anything!

She arose and lit the gas. It was half past ten o'clock. She wrote to her mother and felt comforted by this communion of spirit, although she did not tell the nature of her troubles. Her mother had never been her comforter in maturer years, being of a disposition that demanded more sympathy than she had to offer in return; lovable, sincere and devoted, but with a clinging, dependent nature. The mere act of turning to some one in her grief was some solace to the girl, and afterwards she went to bed where she tossed sleepless for many hours when rest-

less slumber and troubled dreams attended her till dawn.

She awoke from a light slumber with a horrible dread over her soul, a dread of what new terrors the day might hold in store. How could she endure quietly the degrading association with her voluble female neighbor, and the crafty smile of Coburn as he talked with her, his insinuating glances on Jetty's face the while, giving his words a double meaning and force? Before to-day, she had had something to sustain her courage, the anchor of a sublime love, but to-day she felt irrevocably and terribly alone. She had no one but herself now, and it was impossible to endure it all any longer. She dared not leave her desk at his approach; he or Jermyn would observe and make note of it, and yet to remain, compromised not only her dignity but her self-respect. things could not go on in this way indefinitely. day, perhaps not far off, she would be compelled to have another interview with Coburn, and what should she say? How could she escape without a scene? If she dared to tell him exactly what she thought of him, it could do him no harm whatever, but would make herself liable to be dismissed for insubordination. She must do something, no matter She intended to resign soon anyway, but she meant to resign voluntarily. While she remained in office she must protect herself from him in some way. Already love had stirred her soul to new life. Now

those passions which had long lain dormant in her innermost consciousness, half revealed, half concealed under the drooping lids and in certain lines of mouth and brow, were also awakening. The volcano was alive. The other self was making known its personality.

How they surprise us, these other selves! Springing into action at some crisis in our lives and driving us to deeds before undreamed of! To cultivate all the faculties requires a life of action and communion with the outer world. Many a possible queen of wealth and fashion or queen of discontent, many a possible artist of the boards, of intrigue, aye, of crime, may be found hidden away in convent walls in the person of some lily-like nun, praying away the sins of the world and dreaming only of heaven. Circumstance and opportunity determine the history of our inner or possible selves.

Jetty felt that she must do something, but what? She arose with a sudden resolve. She would go that afternoon to see one of the Census girls who had a typewriter. She would ask to use it on some pretext and write an anonymous letter to Mrs. Coburn. She knew that an anonymous letter was generally considered a contemptible and cowardly refuge, but she was a weak, helpless girl entangled in a web of trying circumstance, and any weapon should be excusable. She must do her own fighting alone, now, and if she struck from ambush and hit her enemy in

the back, it was only because she felt her weakness to cope with him openly.

She spent the day concocting her scheme. She composed a letter which would say practically nothing while implying much concerning the chief clerk and a certain handsome widow with beautiful white hair. If his wife knew, he would certainly be a little less bold in his attentions to the lady, and so rid Jetty of his society. The letter gave her something to think about, and so preoccupied was she that Mr. Coburn's visit that day did not aggravate her feelings so much as usual.

She did not mail the letter until next morning on her way to office, as she wanted it to reach the lady in the absence of her husband. She had no sooner mailed the letter than a great terror seized her, a terror of what she had done, and she would have brought it back if she could. All day she was preoccupied with anticipation of the inevitable disgrace in store for her should the writer of the letter be discovered. She was also seized with remorse for causing suffering to another woman in order to free herself from danger—another woman who was happy, perhaps, in a fool's paradise.

On the usual visit of the chief clerk she was startled to hear Mrs. Perkins remark to him apropos of something he had teasingly said:

"Never mind, Cobie! I'm going to start some terrible tale about you, now! Look out!"

Jetty was frightened. Was the lady a mindreader? But she was forced to conclude that it was only one of those telepathic coincidences for which science has as yet no plausible explanation. Mrs. Perkins could not possibly know.

The next day was Sunday and she was glad to have an intervening day to prepare herself for whatever ordeal awaited her as a result of her rashness. When Monday came she was even more silent than usual, covertly watching the door, dreading to see Mr. Coburn enter the room. But he did not appear all day, and she had just breathed a sigh of relief as the minute hand reached half way round its slowest circle of the twenty-four, the one from three to four in the afternoon, when he suddenly appeared before her, gazing straight into her eyes with a look that made her quail with a nameless fear. He had suffered terribly, his face was drawn and pale, and his eyes had a haunted look in which were mingled both fear and rage. She saw him but an instant as he passed through the room looking for Jermyn. but that was enough to make her tremble. Another instant and he might have read confession in her He noticed the frightened look in her eyes as he passed on. Why should she cringe at his gaze? It set him thinking. His nature was womanish and suspicious.

On that day the appropriation bill containing the clause providing for an increase in his salary was passed by the House.

## CHAPTER XXII

#### THE INSOLENCE OF OFFICE

Jetty accomplished her object in writing the anonymous letter, for Mr. Coburn was seen no more lingering at Mrs. Perkins' desk in close proximity to her own, and watching Jetty's face as he strove in this way to impress her with what was the surest and quickest means to obtain a higher rating on the efficiency report and promotion at the first oppor-She hardly saw him at all for the next week. When business required his presence in the room he tarried there no longer than was necessary, much to the discomfiture of Mrs. Perkins, who missed his visits at once and remarked upon his persistent absence. Jetty felt sure that Mrs. Perkins knew nothing of the letter, but she had vague apprehensions that the chief clerk guessed the identity of the writer. One day each typewriter was requested to write a certain sentence on the machine he used and hand it This was done presumably for the purpose of determining the condition of each machine and the style of its work, but Jetty felt sure that each slip was to be compared with the writing of the letter. She noticed about this time, also, that Mr. Coburn wore a flower in his buttonhole each day, and that his

old smile had returned. Evidently he was on good terms with his wife again. It never occurred to her to suspect that he was doing everything to invite another similar letter, in order to trace the writer of the first one. She had attained her object and was satisfied with what she had done, although she was wild with fear lest he would force the secret from her in some way. There was no other way for him to find it out, for no one else knew anything about it. Never before had she found it necessary to protect herself by doubtful means. A novice at dissimulation, she had never told a lie in her life, and yet she lay awake at night wondering whether, if she were asked about it, she would acknowledge the authorship of the letter or not.

One day he overtook her in the hall and spoke pleasantly concerning the weather. He wore a rose in his buttonhole, and his smile was as crafty as of old.

- "What a beautiful rose," she remarked, for want of something to say.
- "Yes," he replied, "my wife insisted on decorating me this morning. You know women love to do those things. I hardly know why. I never try to account for what a woman may take a fancy to do, so I let her pin it on every morning. I'm a patient man."
  - "Well, why shouldn't she?"
- "Oh, there's no reason why she shouldn't, of course."

Here she turned a corner and their ways separated. This conversation did not allay her fears. It looked as though he wished her to know of the reconciliation with his wife; and of what interest could that be to her, unless she had some interest in the letter also? If she was rid of his society it mattered not to her. Let the lady enjoy her delusion as long as she could.

When she went home that day she found a letter from Mr. Kimball, her first since her renunciation, and its tender confiding tone crushed her with wild regret. She rushed up to her room and fought the same battle over again, the fierce tide of an undying passion beating ceaselessly against the bulwark of Puritan principle.

"There is only one way and that is the right one. Why should I struggle against it? I'm ashamed of myself."

It kept her awake far into the night. Once she arose and, making a light, reread his letters, an endearing name on her lips at every line, and fondly kissing his name at the end.

"I ought to write to him and tell him it is all over," she thought, "but I don't know how to do it. I don't know what to say."

She went back to bed again and towards morning dozed off into a fitful slumber which kept her in bed later than usual. She arrived at the office at three minutes past nine. Jermyn, ever watchful, at once requested her to make a memorandum recording the

fact of her tardiness for the information of the chief clerk, so that the time clerk could charge her with an hour's leave of absence. Later in the day she went to see the time clerk in regard to it.

"Oh, I wouldn't bother about that," he said. "Mrs. Perkins is frequently late and the chief clerk never sends me her memorandums at all, so I don't take anything off her leave. I guess if you keep quiet about it he'll treat you the same way."

She did not think so, but was forced to be content.

Another day she went at noon to the bank, which was several minutes' walk from the building, in order to buy a check to send home. She returned to her desk in about twenty-five minutes and the remaining five minutes she devoted to disposing of her lunch. She ate it as quickly as she could, but took an extra five minutes or so to eat an apple and a piece of cake.

About an hour afterward Jermyn came to her desk with a copy of the regulations to be observed by clerks, and pointed out the rule in regard to the half hour allowed for luncheon.

- "How much time is in a half hour, Miss Downing?"
  - "Thirty minutes."
- "A half hour means thirty minutes and no more. You were seen eating your lunch at thirty-five minutes past twelve and the chief clerk would like to have an explanation. Please make a memorandum of the fact, and state the cause of it."

The office force was still kept an extra hour each day, in order to bring up certain work which was in arrears, and each clerk stayed faithfully and uncomplainingly for the extra hour, and yet was not allowed a few minutes' grace at noon, or at nine o'clock, no matter how pressing or urgent were their own private affairs.

On reaching home that day, a letter from her mother awaited her, a letter detailing many woes. Little Frankie had the measles and Jack had just recovered from it. Susie had sprained her ankle, and her mother had everything to do and no help, and no money to hire any, or to pay the doctor's bill, either. The cow had gone dry, and they had to buy butter and milk, and the garden had all gone to weeds for want of attention.

"I don't think this the best time in the world to give up your position, but of course you must know best, and anyway, I reckon the Lord will provide somehow," the letter ran. It was out of the question to give up her position just now, that was plain. She must wait until things looked brighter, perhaps in a few months,—but then by that time Mr. Kimball would be back, and how could she ever face him and withstand him? The thought made her faint. She went about with a dull ache in her heart. Cut off for the time from a mother's love and sympathy, and all the comforting ties of home, barred by fate from that other love whose essence breathed eternity,

mortified by daily association with one of her sex whose coarse nature made her blush with shame, humiliated by insolent holders of office who brazenly insinuated the price at which they held her advancement, harassed on every hand by petty regulations that irritated but did not curb her spirit, exhausted by the endless struggle between duty and inclination, small wonder that all this began to tell on her vitality. In the few weeks of Kimball's absence the frank, fearless girl became the world weary woman, sick of heart, acquainted with sorrow. Her cold had also grown from bad to worse, aggravated by the extremes of temperature which Jermyn compelled her to endure.

The day after receiving her mother's letter, Jermyn came to her with a paper in his hand which bore a statement of the schedule of time assigned to the various clerks in which to take their leave of absence.

"This was made out in May, just before you came into the division," he said, "and you have last choice. What month do you usually take?"

"I've been going away in August."

"August! Everybody can't go in August. Let's see. Oh my, no! It's all taken up now. I can't spare more than five clerks at once you know, and six are down for August now."

"September, then?"

"No, that's all gone, too. There's room for one

more in October or July, though, if you want that."

"I have only two weeks left. I will take them in July," she said, wearily.

"What part of July? This is the last day of June."

"The first two weeks. The fourth comes on Saturday. I will apply for the two weeks beginning the sixth."

She was glad at the prospect of getting away somewhere. She felt as though she could not stand the strain another minute. Miss Wilkins had given her a pass to a nearby resort on the eastern shore of Maryland, one of a series distributed by a real estate firm, and as she thought she could find board there at a reasonable price, she resolved to go there for the two weeks. or as much of the time as she could afford. She would have to go alone as none of the girls she knew would be ready to go away so early in the While in the Census office, she had once gone on a short trip with the girls to Atlantic City and had spent the merriest time of her life. been her first visit to the seashore. She had that fascination for the sea peculiar to a person reared inland, to whom it has never grown too familiar, or whom its incessant moaning has never wearied, nor its turbulence disturbed. Thoughts of the sea possessed her for the next few days. There she would find companionship in its restlessness, and her heart could echo its endless song of baffled desire.

216

In the meantime Kimball had begun to miss her letters and every day or two would write, full of solicitation. One morning she received a telegram. She almost fainted before opening it, as she thought of Frankie's measles. Fortunately Mrs. Perkins was out of the room just then, or the whole office would have found out that the message was from Kimball. It ran:

"Are you ill? Wire me at once, my expense.
"Kimball."

She was compelled to answer: "No. Will explain."

That afternoon she was accosted by Jones, who ran after her in the hall. He had a yellow envelope in his hand. Kimball in his anxiety had lost all discretion and wired to Jones for news of Jetty. She stood before him red and pale by turns.

"What shall I tell him?" asked Jones.

"Tell him," she stammered, "that we must not think of each other any more; that I have changed my mind, or—anything you like."

She turned away, but as he stood staring after her helplessly, she came back to him and said, her voice broken with emotion:

"Tell him to always remember my last words to him the night before he went away."

"Her last words," muttered Jones as he ran his freshly sharpened pencil through his hair. "Poor Kimball! he must be in a state of mind about something. I knew he was mighty hard hit."

And he went back to his desk pondering over the strange chance that had made him, matter-of-fact Jones, the messenger of love.

About this time the semi-annual efficiency report was posted conspicuously in one of the main rooms of the office and Jetty's name was now at the bottom of the list. Upon comparing her standing with that of the last report, she found that she had been put down four numbers. This was due no doubt to the chief clerk's displeasure. In the first report she was marked 86 in efficiency. Now her average was 82. Four numbers! It represented the official value set by one of Uncle Sam's appraisers upon a young girl's probity.

She was in great haste now to get away, for any day Kimball might return and she was not prepared to see him again just now. She would tell no one where she went, so that he could not follow her. On looking over the time-table for boats to Long Point, where she wished to go, she found that to catch the early boat she would have to spend the night in Baltimore in order to make a day trip. She would take a lunch with her, and have to pay only for lodging in Baltimore. She gave up her room in order to save rent for the two weeks, putting away her extra belongings in a packing trunk which she left at the house. She intended to come back to the same place at the end of her vacation and would stand a good

chance of getting back her room, as there is little demand for rooms in town in the summer. She made her plans to stop at a quiet hotel in Baltimore which had been recommended to her by Miss Wilkins, but in her ignorance neglected to notify them in advance.

She left Washington after dinner and arrived in Baltimore about eight o'clock. As she left the train at Mt. Royal station with her light satchel in her hand, she thought she saw a familiar figure in the crowd leaving the parlor car. She went on ahead of them and paused a moment after passing through the gate in order to make sure, but she did not see the figure again. It was a smallish man, with red whiskers and a lady's walk.

"I could swear that I saw Mr. Coburn just now," she thought, but banished her fears and passed out to the street.

Arrived at the hotel, she was ushered into the lady's parlor where she told the porter that she wished a room for the night. The porter summoned the bell boy, and the boy went to consult the night clerk, who began to examine a pile of letters to see if any lady had ordered a room reserved for her.

"H-m! Beppo, go and ask if she ordered a room in advance."

The boy obeyed.

"No," answered Jetty. "Why? Are all the rooms taken?"

"No, Miss, but we never take a lady who comes alone unless she has ordered a room beforehand."

"Oh, I didn't know that! What in the world am I to do, then?"

Beppo was a sympathetic youth of Latin origin, well trained in his duties. His manner was deferential to servility. Nothing would have disturbed him more than to be told that he didn't know his place, for he had not yet learned to presume to that equality with his superiors which his American-born fellow servants took for granted. And yet Beppo, with that eye for the beautiful which is an instinct with his race, paused to glance again at the beautiful face before him, with the dark, mysterious eyes of sorrow. At this moment the porter called to him:

"Beppo! Here, take the lady to number fifty-four," and handed him a key.

Without inquiring into the cause of this sudden change of affairs, Jetty followed him to number fiftyfour, which proved to be a fair-sized room fitted up for one person.

"Is there anything you wish, Miss?" asked Beppo, after placing her bag on a chair and pausing before her. He spoke with a precise articulation as if not altogether sure of his English.

"No. Oh yes, please bring me some ice water."

She seated herself on a chair and opening her travelling bag, took out two packages which she had bought that afternoon and examined them. One was a new shirt waist and the other was a bottle of laudanum which she used for the toothache. Her cold

still lingered, and had lately assumed a neuralgic tendency. She used the laudanum when the tooth ached in the night.

"I wonder if I've forgotten the piece of cotton."

She put the packages on the bed, and leaning over the bag, looked through its contents in search of the cotton. In doing so she faced the door into the hall. Hearing a knock she thought it was Beppo with the ice water, and cried:

"Come in."

But the door did not open and she looked up in surprise. At that moment she heard some one clearing his throat just behind her, and starting up she let fall the bag and all its contents. A man stood between her and the window, a small man with red hair and whiskers, and a crafty, familiar smile.

It was Wilmer Coburn.

## CHAPTER XXIII

#### WILMER COBURN

"Don't scream. It's all right," he said advancing.
"I only want to have a talk with you on a matter of business."

"How did you get in?"

He pointed to a door which communicated with the next room.

"My room is next to yours."

Just then a knock was heard at the door.

"Go back for Heaven's sake," cried the girl in a low tone. "It's the boy with the ice water."

"You won't make any fuss until you hear what I've got to say?"

"If you don't go back at once I shall raise an alarm."

"And harm yourself more than me. Nonsense! You're not afraid of me. You've known me too long for that. Now I'll go back and shut the door right away if you promise to let the boy go quietly and then have a talk with me."

There was a moment's pause during which the knock was heard again.

"I promise," said the girl with a sudden resolve.

"On your honor?"

"On my honor."

"All right. I shall listen at the door, though."

He went back and closed the door softly. She went swiftly to the other door and, unbolting it, let the boy come in. Beppo, much interested in the strange girl so young and so beautiful, did not hurry in pouring the ice water into the pitcher which he found on the wash stand. The lady acted strangely, he thought. Why did she rush to the bed and nervously tear a piece of wrapping paper off a package and then begin hastily to write on it, placing the paper on the little table and getting down on one knee to reach it? Finally, he turned to go, having no further excuse to detain him.

"Oh, Beppo!" she cried in a distinct voice, "please put the water on the window sill for me. It will keep cooler there."

Why did her eyes shine so brightly, and why was her cheek so pale? She began to search on the floor and under the table.

- "Is there anything else I can do for you, Miss?"
- "Oh, I can't find my pocket-book," the words were evenly spoken but he saw her fingers tremble as she folded the paper in her hand.
- "Oh, here it is!" she cried in the same tone. It had lain on the table all the time.

A minute later Beppo stood in the hall with the folded paper and a two dollar bill in his hand, puzzling his mystified brain over the queer behavior of these lovely American ladies. Why had this one spoken in so loud a voice at first and then suddenly dropped to a whisper as though frightened as she handed him the note and the money and said:

"Send this telegram at once and not a word to any one on your life, not a word!" and then opened the door to hasten his departure, with her finger on her lip? It might all be a joke or the lady might be insane. At any rate she was very beautiful, and he was not to say anything about it all. But she had not forbidden his reading the message, so he stopped under the nearest gas jet to do so.

"Why, it's to a woman!" he muttered in a disappointed tone. It ran thus:

"Mrs. Wilmer Coburn,

"1143 —th Street N. W., Washington, D. C. "Come to me at once. I need you.

"Wilmer Coburn,
"Hotel Allegheny, Baltimore, Md."

More mystified than ever he sent the dispatch and went about his duties, shaking his head the while, and determining to keep an eye on the strange young lady's movements.

During her colloquy with Coburn, Jetty's mind acted like a flash of lightning which suddenly illumines the path beyond just in time to prevent a plunge into the darkness. She saw the man waiting for her

promise, the package on the bed with the paper round it, a pencil on the table left by some previous occupant of the room, her travelling bag on the floor, and the window curtains back of Coburn fluttering in the summer breeze; also a bottle of laudanum which had not been unwrapped. Here was everything she needed, for she felt capable of anything. For five minutes Coburn waited at the door, and when he heard the other door close he rapped softly and came at her word.

The girl stood with her hand on the door knob as if prepared to fly.

- "Come in and take a look at my apartment, won't you? It's a fine large room. I suppose these rooms in this corner once belonged to a suite, and mine must have been the sitting room. Aren't you going to have any supper to-night?" asked he.
- "His wife will get the message in half an hour at least, another half hour before she can start, one hour to get here, two hours and fifteen minutes in all," she was thinking.
  - "I'm not hungry," she replied.
- "I'm going to order supper for two up here where we can talk undisturbed. What do you say?"
  - "Oh, very well."
  - "What will you have?"
  - " Anything."
  - "Will you come in now?"
  - "Oh, I must make my toilet first, you know."

She marvelled at her own composure, and Coburn was surprised to see the shy, sweet smile which had vanished from her face for so long. She left the door and began to take some of her toilet articles from her bag and arranged them about the bureau. After all there could be no danger.

"Have you been shopping?" he inquired, coming toward the other end of the room as if to go into the hall and noticing the parcel on the bed. He was now between her and the door.

"Yes, I——" She paused frozen with alarm as she saw him turn the key in the door and remove it.

"With your permission, Miss Jetty, I will take charge of this key for the present. It won't do to trust a woman too far, and I'm determined to have an interview with you before it is too late and my prospects are ruined forever.

"You shouldn't have such an expressive face. I read your purpose there. You meant to leave before the supper came, didn't you? You have forced me to take this precaution; you've forced me to do it. As soon as I can get the information I want from you, I will give you back the key, not before. Now I'll see about supper while you dress. I hope to see you look your prettiest."

Her first impulse was to ring the electric bell, or to cry out the window and raise an outcry, but she thought better of it. She rushed after him to examine the door by which he had left her, only to find

that it had no fastening on her side. She was For some minutes she stood in the centre of the room thinking. She felt sure that the anonymous letter must have something to do with his strange behavior to-night. She would like to hear what he had to say. It was still early, only a little past eight o'clock. She would take as long as possible to arrange her hair and brush her dress, and so use up most of the first hour. She bathed her face and hands and changed her collar, then brushed her dress and shoes. She took down her hair and got out the curling irons. Luckily she had them in the bag. One can use up many minutes in curling one's hair properly. Presently he came and knocked discreetly, but when she opened the door with a hairpin in her mouth and her long black hair flowing about her shoulders, he asked her pardon and returned.

> "She walks in beauty like the night Of cloudless climes and starry skies,"

he quoted as he turned back into his room.

She curled her hair as slowly as she could and then moved about the room swiftly and noiselessly as she put everything back in her bag, for she meant to be ready to fly at a moment's notice. Coburn, growing impatient, knocked again.

"The supper's all laid and everything is waiting on you. I could have dressed a dozen times."

She had opened the door in answer to his knock and stood before him again, her face like the pale moon looking out from an aureole of darksome clouds. She had put off arranging her hair until the last moment. He put his hand on his heart and made obeisance with that air of gallantry which she had learned to despise.

"Oh, glorious queen of the night," he said, "the feast is ready and your knight attends your pleasure. He is also hungry. You don't need any preparation to look beautiful, you know. I wish you would come in just as you are now. I really do."

This was enough. She went back to the mirror and arranged her hair. Just before going in she heard a clock somewhere strike nine. One hour and a half more!

With her new strength there came also a new courage born of that other self which had slumbered so long. She would dissemble. He should think for the time at least that she accepted the circumstances without protest. He was master of the situation now, but much can happen in an hour. She walked into the room radiant and smiling, but a certain tremor about the lips, an unusual pallor in her cheek, betrayed her agitation. She was no dissembler.

It was a spacious apartment handsomely furnished, the wall decorations in pale green merging into deeper shades of green. There was a dark gran-

ite mantel, over which hung a large mirror reflecting everything so distinctly that it was like looking into another room. A table laid for two stood in the centre of the floor.

"I'm sorry to have kept you waiting," she said, but I was simply covered with coal dust and not fit to be seen."

She sat down facing the mirror. Coburn sat opposite and began to carve the roast chicken. Then she became aware that a servant stood behind her chair. She looked up into the mirror and recognized Beppo, whose curiosity had led him to play the part of waiter for the nonce. He was opening a bottle of wine.

- "Will you have dark meat or light?" asked her vis-à-vis.
  - "Dark; no-light."
  - "Sauce with the dressing?"
  - "No, thank you."

She was apparently composed, but her pallor and nervous manner betrayed the anxiety she tried to conceal. Beppo, standing behind her chair, looked at the lovely face in the mirror in front of him. The dark eyes met his own and he fancied he read in them an appeal. Was she trying to speak to him without words? The eyes bore also a look of dread, a nameless fear seemed to possess them, but he noticed that when her companion looked up again the look had disappeared, and the lady forced a wan

little smile. For the moment her courage was failing.

During Beppo's ministrations he managed to get behind Coburn's chair where he met that look again. What he did was an unpardonable liberty, of course; he was surprised at his own behavior,—but then this woman could drive a man to do anything. As he met her appealing look, his lips noiselessly framed the words in answer to her anxious eyes:

"Is there anything I can do for you, Miss?"

The flush which lit up her face for one instant told him that he was understood.

"I believe I've forgotten my handkerchief," she said rising. "You know I have a cold. Excuse me a moment. No wine for me, if you please," to Beppo. "I don't drink it."

In a few minutes she returned, and Beppo saw her drop a folded paper behind her chair as she sat down. He managed to pick it up unobserved, and while Coburn was absorbed in his meal, he read it covertly. It was a single line written on a piece of the same wrapping paper as the telegram. It ran:

"Please give me a key to No. 54."

Shades of the Medici! Here was an intrigue that rivalled anything he had ever known even under the bright skies of his own land of romance. He felt for his pass key, and in removing the plates, let it drop in the lady's lap. He meant to watch that door closely. A secret of this kind might be turned to his

own advantage. The lady was so rich as well as so beautiful, and could afford to pay well for his silence. It might be the making of his own fortune. As he pursued these reflections, he stood back of the lady's chair and gazed into the mirror in unconscious admiration of her face. Coburn, glancing up, observed it and remarked at once that Beppo might go.

"I haven't had my ice cream and coffee yet," remarked the girl.

She had lingered over each dish, keeping up a constant flow of small talk, helping herself plentifully and pretending to eat heartily in her effort to prolong the meal. After Beppo served the ice cream and coffee, Coburn told him he was no longer needed.

"Is there anything more I can do for you?" he inquired in his precise English, with his eyes on the girl's face.

"We'll ring when we want you," said Coburn, and Beppo departed.

"You seem to have smitten him, too," he went on. "Did you see how he lingered? I have had no chance to talk to you yet. It's a fine thing to be so fascinating."

It was coming. She must either acknowledge the authorship of the letter or deny it. To conceal her nervousness she arose and went to examine a curiously carved figure on the mantel—one of those Lares so plentifully produced in our own country and sold as Chinese importations.

Coburn leaned back in his chair enjoying a cigar as he watched her. He was not entirely devoid of the nobler instincts which distinguish civilized man from his primitive state; he was only the result of certain influences and conditions which had shaped his career and made him what he was. He wished the girl no evil now; he only desired to conciliate her for he feared the harm she might do him, even she, a friendless, lonely young girl. Beauty in whatever guise sang to him ever the same siren song, but in Jetty Downing the song was pitched in a mysterious key with subtle inflections in its harmony; an unknown symphony set to the music of the stars. She was beyond him and the knowledge piqued him. He was only an ordinary man, neither great in his duplicity nor without some better impulses even in his depravity.

He watched her as she paused before a portrait of a beautiful woman in an old-fashioned chair with her figure turned toward the observer as if listening to some speech in reply to a witticism of her own.

"Well, how do you like Madame Recamier?" asked he.

"Is this Madame Recamier, the most charming woman in the world? I like her, but I believe I like this better," as she turned to another picture representing a Circassian beauty in all the luxuriance of dark tresses, richly tinted skin, full red lips and marvellously glowing eyes.

# The Other Side of the Story

- "And no wonder, for you are her twin sister. That is Haidee. Did you ever read Don Juan?"
- "No. I don't remember Haidee. I'm very glad to make her acquaintance."
- "Do you know I believe some of your ancestors must have come from the East. You are more beautiful than this Georgian even." He came to her side.
- "I haven't finished my coffee," she said as she returned to the table.

He resumed his chair with a more serious countenance than she had seen that evening. She began to talk on indifferent subjects, wishing to put off the dreaded subject a little longer.

"I don't believe my new waist is a good fit," she was saying. "I'll have to exchange it. I——"

He interrupted her.

232

- "Will you kindly listen to me? I want to ask you something that concerns me very closely and may make or mar my future welfare. Why did you write that letter to my wife?"
- "It wasn't a letter. Oh! you mean—— I don't know what you mean."
- "Oh yes, you do! You're the very young lady that sent it. I knew it as soon as I met your eye the day afterward. You looked frightened at what you had done. You quailed as your eye met mine. I don't see why you did it, and I want to know if there were any others. Did you write any more

anonymous letters, to the Secretary, for instance, or to the Committee on Appropriations?"

The girl sat silent, looking downward and pondering.

- "The only excuse I can see for it is jealousy." She sprang to her feet.
- "I did it for my own protection! It was not jealousy. Please divest yourself of that idea at once! I saw no other way of relieving myself of your daily society."
- "You didn't have to do that to protect yourself from me. I never force my attentions on any woman."
  - "Indeed! Then why have you---"
- "Never mind! I'm coming to that. You have forced me to take this step to-night. I saw that if I did not have you in a tight place, I would not be able to get at the truth, or extract a promise from you to desist from making any more such communications. There has been a hitch from the very first in getting that clause through in the sundry civil bill, and I can't imagine the cause unless you have volunteered some information similar to that contained in the other letter. Now I ask you once for all, how many of these letters have you written, and to whom?"

Here was a strange situation. The man whom she had so feared as her most formidable enemy was really afraid of her; was even ready to make terms, it appeared. She sank back in her chair with a hysterical laugh. Regaining her composure, she inquired:

- "Suppose I say it was all 'for the good of the service'?"
- "The matter is too serious for jesting, Miss Downing. I am to infer that there were other letters?"
- "I beg your pardon. I laughed because the tables were turned; that was all."

His face reddened with anger.

"I'll show how the tables are turned, if you like. I'm afraid you don't realize the compromising nature of our conference here to-night. I have done it purposely, of course, because I mean to find out what I want to know. Didn't you know that no reputable hotel will take any woman who comes alone, unannounced, after dark? I appeared at the right moment; we had really come in at the same time but you didn't see me, and ordered a suite for myself and niece. Suppose this thing were known—"

"To the Committee on Appropriations?"

He looked at the girl in some astonishment. This was not the Jetty Downing he had known, the modest, shy and diffident—but another, quick, alert, with a mighty reserve force at her command. It was not in her nature to feign a calmness she did not feel; but passion could move her to unwonted bravery, even to desperate deeds.

"Now, if you promise to cease your persecution of me with anonymous letters, I'll leave this place

immediately and never annoy you again. If you do not promise——"

- "Well?"
- "I shall remain."
- "I will promise as a matter of course, but first let me ask one thing. Why did you take this method of bringing me to terms? You might have seen me any day in Washington; you didn't have to follow me to this place in order to obtain an interview. And another thing; if you swore to me before Heaven that you would leave me at once, what assurance have I that you would keep your word? I have known you to tell too many lies. I couldn't believe you on oath."
- "You'd better be glad you're a woman. I wouldn't take that from a man."
  - "You'd take it if I were a man."
- "I don't want to quarrel with you, Miss Jetty. Calm yourself now, and let's talk about the proposition in a business-like manner. I would like to be a friend. You might have done anything you wished with me. You don't know how magnificent you are when you're angry. You're not the same person. I knew it was there all the time."
  - "What do you mean?"
- "I knew you had the devil in you; that's what I mean. Gosh! it makes you more beautiful still."

She had heard the clock strike half-past ten. Surely it would not be much longer before some answer came to her telegram. She made an effort to dissemble in order to pass off the time. She would have revenge if possible. She threw him a coquettish glance and replied:

- "You don't know me, that is all."
- "Which one of you am I to know? You have so many moods."
  - "Which would you like?"
- "Well, to my mind, there's nothing so attractive as an amiable woman. Of course I admire beauty in whatever guise I see it, but clothed in amiability it is always at its best."
  - "Then, I suppose I must be amiable."
- "Then, if you are amiable, you will do whatever I ask, won't you, and I'll ask it before your mood changes." He came over to where she still sat. "I want a parting kiss to seal your promise. Then I will go away and bother you no more as long as I live. Don't look so indignant. What's a kiss anyway? A very small thing to make so much fuss about."

She had risen with a low cry and stood before him with flashing eyes, her bosom heaving. She had been angry before, but now she was the personification of rage. All the slumbering passions were awake and led the furies in their train.

"If you dare to touch me, I will kill you if it takes me a lifetime to do it!" she spoke in a low voice that quivered with passion. "You said just

now that you hardly knew me to-night. I do not know myself. I'm no longer a mere girl, I'm a tigress at bay."

"Can this be the mild, gentle, timid, sweet-voiced Southern girl that upset all my office with her quiet little ways?"

"I will not only kill you, but I will proclaim my story from the house tops. The whole world shall know why I killed you. I'll forget all pride, all modesty——"

"And all for what, pray?"

"For the sake of honor! The platitudes which you hold up to ridicule will still go down to posterity as gems of truth. I believe that virtue is its own reward, and it must be the only reward of a virtuous woman when she is in the power of a man like you. I shall be a woman no longer, but an avenging angel."

"I didn't mean it, of course. Don't take it so seriously."

There was a slight pause, during which the girl seemed measuring the strength of her resources. The diffident manner, the shy reserve was gone. For the time she was transformed into a living incarnation of righteous indignation, of innocence at bay, rising in its dignity and demanding the rights of womanhood. When a nature like this is stirred from its quiet depths, roused by a sense of wrong, and lashed into sublime rage, the result is something so

powerful that everything must give way before it. For the moment she stood for the wrongs of her kind, and spoke for a sisterhood oppressed by a unique system of laws which protect the oppressor. Jetty, the timorous in safety, was not afraid in the face of danger.

"Listen!" she said. "The other day I came to you in distress, a friendless girl placed by you where I was subjected to every possible humiliation and in-At my home a man would be sulting language. tarred and feathered for speaking to a lady as he did to me. I went to you in tears with my appeal to be put back on the work I had first learned to do. Had you been a gentleman you would have listened to me with respect and investigated the affair. A chief clerk owes something to those who are under his surveillance. Instead of an attentive ear from you. what did I receive? An insult! that was all! know now why my name is at the bottom of the efficiency list, because I have not smiled and cringed and flattered and fawned upon you; because I have too much self-respect to truckle for favor to such as you, or attempt to rival such favorites as Mrs. Perkins!"

"There now; suppose we change the subject."

"When I have done and not before. You have no right to let personal feelings or prejudices influence you in your rating of the clerks. You expect to have your salary increased by an act of Congress, and yet you have reduced the salaries of those under you who have served the Government quite as faithfully as you, but did not happen to please you personally; you require the strictest observance of a set of obnoxious rulings from all the clerks excepting only your favorites, who can do pretty much as they please without a reprimand. The rest of us are kept at our desks like children at school while they are allowed all sorts of privileges, and still are rated above the rest of us on the efficiency report."

For a moment Coburn stood silenced, abashed. The light of heaven dazzles the eyes of the carnal minded.

"If Kimball could only see you now," he broke in.
." Is it true that you have quarrelled? I heard you had."

She stopped at the name she loved, and stood with downcast head and flushed cheeks. She flung out her hands with a gesture of sorrow and the key fell from her hand where she had kept it concealed in a hand-kerchief. Coburn picked it up.

"Now where in the world did you get this?" he asked. "It's not the one I took just now." He came closer.

"Don't think I'm afraid of you. I'm master of the situation still, am I not?" as he held up the key. In truth he only meant to taunt her, but she was so terribly in earnest herself that she took his threat at its face value. accusing eyes and in them faced in She was not the modest maid of the oracular, accusing Nemesis of beautiful fiend from an old-tine had leaped to life in her eyes blood. He gasped for breath.

Just then a woman's falsetto the corridor mingled with the lo Beppo in expostulation.

"My wife's voice!" he cried ened the vise-like grasp of her fi is your doing! Oh!" He clut spasm of pain contorted his face, chair with an oath. The key f His head sank forward on hi blanched, his arms fell limp at moment and his wife bent over anxiety. She chafed his cold I pulse; she opened his vest and

with eyes that seemed to see not and ears that seemed to hear not, in the direction of the railroad station.

The morning papers containing an account of the tragedy bore on an inside page devoted to the doings of Congress the statement that the sundry civil bill had been favorably reported to the Senate from the Senate Committee. This bill contained the clause providing for the promotion of Wilmer Coburn, chief clerk in the office of the Seventh Auditor of the Treasury.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### GIANT DESPAIR

Long Point is one of the quietest resorts on the Eastern shore, lying midway of a long narrow island which stretches between the ocean and an inlet of This island is divided up into town lots the sea. and has long been the arena of real estate booms and depressions, the same lots buying and selling at prices that rivalled the fluctuations of Wall Street. A high board walk runs parallel with the water for several miles beside a long row of cottages and a few hotels. There are no side shows or other attractions of the Coney Island variety, the only pleasance being afforded by the reaches and hillocks of sand It is a popular resort for and the surf beyond. families with children.

The principal hotel was the Seaside, and it was here that Miss Margaret Castleton had come toward the last of June in the absence of the Solicitor-General, who was called away from his office to a distant city, leaving his special stenographer to her own devices. Her cousins, the Bloomer family, were spending the summer at their cottage at Long Point, and hither she had come, where she could rest from everything and yet be near her friends. She usually

breakfasted alone in the hotel dining-room, went to her cousin's for luncheon and would bring some of the family to dine with her at the hotel in the evening. She took long walks with the children, going in the morning to see the oyster beds, returning to see the bathing, and perhaps to go in. In the afternoon they whiled away the hours playing in the sand and the children always rejoiced when Cousin Mottie joined them.

Margaret's room faced the south, as she preferred that to one facing the ocean as did all the front rooms of the hotel. She could hear the waves, however, as they crooned their eternal lullaby to the stars, while she lay wakeful and listening dreamily. She had become so accustomed to late hours that it was hardly worth while to retire early as she did at Long Point. She had made no friends among the guests at the hotel, nor did she care to do so, as what she needed most was complete rest of mind and body. A young lady who keeps up the social strain as well as the duties of a stenographer and typewriter for a hard-worked official must be pretty well run down by the end of the season. She would go to bed at ten o'clock, but rarely slept until much later. or if she did, would awake in the night and lie awake for a while listening to the monotonous sea song that surged in at the windows. She lay thus one night when she had been at the hotel for about a week, her half-opened eyes fixed upon the patch of light visible from her open window. She had been awake for some minutes when she became aware that another sound was mixed with the chant of the waves. It seemed to be in the room adjoining her own which communicated with hers by means of a door closed and fastened. She listened for the sound again. Some one, a woman, in the next room was sobbing in unison with the wail of the sea.

Margaret arose and lit the gas and stirred about, thinking that perhaps some one was ill and needed help, but she did not wish to call through the door to see. She supposed that any one needing help, on hearing a stir in the next room, would let the fact of illness be known. But no one called to her and Margaret went back to bed. For the moment the sounds had ceased, but later on she heard the sobs more muffled than before. She asked the maid next morning if the next room was occupied.

"Yes, Miss, and the poor creature's never left that room since she came here day before yesterday. She wouldn't take the room at first on account of the communicating door. They had to let her see your room because she was afraid you were a man, and she keeps the key on her side. She won't eat anything, and I never see her move from that bed. She just lies there staring at the wall like she could see something awful there, but it's nothing but a plain white wall like yours, not even a picture. How does she look? Well, Miss, she's a regular beauty even if

she's sick; the prettiest black eyes and the loveliest raven black hair you ever saw, all over her shoulders, and the sweetest complexion and the cutest little white hands. Rings? No, I didn't see no rings on her hands, but she wears one round her neck, tied with a ribbon, a regular diamond, too. I saw her kiss it."

"Why doesn't she go out?" asked Margaret, who felt a little guilty at her part in the exposure of another girl's secret. "It would help her if she could take a short walk."

"I do no'm. I think so, too. She drank some of the milk I took her this morning. I think she's a little better to-day."

It was not until a week later that Margaret saw her neighbor whose sobs she continued to hear in the room next her own. She went to breakfast one morning a little earlier than usual, and while waiting for her order to be filled, she saw a young lady ushered in and seated at another small table within her range of vision. The girl was dark of hair and eyes, and very pale. Her pallor was somewhat accentuated by the black gown she wore, a gown of thin, lustreless material, its sombreness relieved only by the red ribbon at her throat. The girl appeared painfully conscious of the general attention she attracted, as she sat sipping a glass of water and studying the bill of fare.

"I've seen her before somewhere," thought Mar-

garet, and after breakfast she went to look at the hotel register. Looking back over the pages she found that the only arrival from Washington in the form of a young lady alone was a Miss Gertrude Downing, who had been in the house for several days. She also noticed that the lady's room was next her own.

"Ah!" said Margaret, much interested.

Soon afterward the strange young lady appeared with her hat on on her way out for a walk, and as she passed quite near, Margaret noticed a sunken look about the eyes; a red tinge of the lids; a nervous quality of her movement; an apparent tenseness of the whole being that betrayed some strong emotion that resisted all bounds. She passed on with downcast eyes, the centre of observation by all the loungers about the hotel office.

- "Do you know that young lady?" inquired a voice at her elbow. The speaker was a short, corpulent man with a blond mustache. He always wore a hat in order to conceal a slight baldness.
- "She's from your city. She's a clerk in the Treasury Department," he added.
- "I think I've seen her somewhere, but I do not know her, Mr. Bowden."
- "Deuced pretty, ain't she? Kind o' queer, I guess, but that's always a woman's privilege."
- Mr. Bowden smiled and showed a row of teeth shining behind the fringe of his mustache. He was the proprietor of the Seaside.

Later on, during her morning walk with the children, Margaret met the girl on the board walk and looked into her eyes for the first time, and the unfathomable depths of their agony made her shudder. They gazed before her, out across the sea, straight into the infinite beyond, with a hopeless, fear-haunted, self-accusing despair. Only an instant and the girl passed on leaving Margaret pausing in awestruck irresolution. It was like passing near the hot breath of a crater lashed and torn by conflicting elements within itself.

"Something must be done very soon," said Margaret. "It is some one's duty to save that girl from herself, and I don't know how to go about it."

"About what, Cousin Mottie?" chorused the children.

"Don't you want to walk back the other way this morning?" she asked of them, and they turned and followed leisurely in the wake of the young lady they had just passed.

When Jetty Downing fled on that fatal night in Baltimore, she took refuge in the ladies' waiting-room of the railroad station until next morning, when she took the early boat for Long Point. On her way to the wharf she heard the newsboys calling, "All about the big murder" but she heeded them not, her mind being busy with the events of the previous night. The sail down the Bay in the fresh,

invigorating salt breeze revived her spirits some-She must learn to suffer and be strong. After all, it was best for her to remain in the recording division; there would be more work; it would be much harder, of course, but if she were to go back to the correspondence division she could never withstand the daily association with the man she loved: she could never resist the hourly appeal of his tender eye, or the gentle reproach of his voice. She was already guilty in loving him; she could not help that now; she would always love him, but if she could only conceal the fact of that love from him, all might vet be well. Each one must bear his cross if he would live up to the best that is in him. She was young and strong, and already began to feel stronger with every mile she placed between herself and the scene of her old griefs. The keen air made her hungry and she went below to breakfast in the café. It was her last hearty meal for some time.

Afterwards she sat on deck and grew sleepy in the sun and wind, her chair so closely surrounded by others that it was difficult to move about. The boat was crowded with people going to spend the holiday out of town. A group of men sat at her elbow reading the papers, smoking and talking.

- "Another murder mystery," said one.
- "Yes; a woman this time."
- "There's always a woman."
- "I wonder what became of her, though? She left nothing but the poison."

"How much laudanum does it take to kill a man?" asked a third voice.

Then she remembered that she had left her bottle of laudanum in her room in the hotel in Baltimore. The nervous excitement of the previous night had driven the toothache away, and she had forgotten all about the bottle. Presently the men moved away to escape the sun which crept further and further under the awning. They left part of a newspaper which the wind blew toward her. It came and fluttered at her feet until she picked it up, glancing at it with sleepy languor as she did so. It was the first page of the morning paper. The next moment a half-stifled cry escaped her as she bent over the sheet. She put up her hand to her face.

"This wind affects my tooth," she explained to the startled excursionists who sat near. "I'll have to go inside," and she arose and moved away. She sought the remotest corner of the cabin before she looked at the paper again. The headlines on the first page ran thus:

"Another Murder Mystery. Wilmer Coburn of Washington found dead in his room in a Baltimore Hotel. A Mysterious Woman suspected. Deceased was Chief Clerk in the Office of the Seventh Auditor of the Treasury."

The article told of a partially filled bottle of laudanum which was found in the room, indicating beyond question that it had been put in the wine which the man was drinking, a half-filled glass being found on the table in front of his chair. A post mortem examination would be held and the wine subjected to a chemical analysis to discover the presence of the Mrs. Coburn, who had first discovered her husband's body, had been prostrated ever since, and was unable to make a statement. The most important witness, and the only one who had seen the mysterious lady, was an Italian waiter named Beppo Bianca, who had given an accurate description of her to the police, and they had telegraphed it all over They had an important clue and hoped the country. Poor Jetty felt as though she to locate her soon. would die of horror as she read all this, but when she read what followed, the description of her given to the police by Beppo, it was with a superhuman effort that she restrained herself from screaming He had given them a description exactly opposite to what was really true. He said the lady was a small blonde, with the most heavenly blue eyes; that she wore a great deal of jewelry and seemed to have a great deal of money, for she had tossed him a fee of five dollars as though it were only a quarter. Also she wore a dark blue travelling dress of silk, and a white hat with black feathers. Jetty looked at her plain black skirt and simple shirt waist and breathed a sigh of relief, and, forgetting her conscientious scruples, blessed the skilful, timely lies of ready-witted Beppo.

She sat leaning back on the cushioned seat with closed eyes for some minutes after reading the article. Presently she started up at the sudden realization of her own culpability. She had been so much alarmed at the knowledge of Coburn's death and her own danger in connection with it, that she had not tried to account for his death. She arose and walked swiftly to the side of the boat and, leaning over, gazed into the water's depth. A man near enough to see her face started forward with a restraining hand, but drew back smiling at his own fears.

She had to support herself on the railing, for her knees gave way under her. With blanched cheek and trembling lips she gazed deep down into the foam as she murmured:

"It was I that killed him. I am a murderer!"

She spent the days that followed her arrival at Long Point in a ceaseless agony of remorse, keeping closely in her room, lying sometimes for hours looking steadily at the wall, sometimes walking the floor and wringing her hands in the anguish of consuming despair. Sometimes she sobbed aloud and prayed, but always broke off in her appeal for mercy from Heaven when she remembered that on that terrible night when her fingers clutched the dying man's throat, there was murder in her heart.

"I wanted to kill him when I did it, but I had no idea that I was doing it," she whispered between

sobs. "I do not dare to pray when I have forfeited all claim to mercy. I have fallen from grace."

On her first Sunday at the hotel she had gone out to the church of her faith. She had noticed it on the day of her arrival and found her way to it again without asking questions. She went hoping for some comfort like that she had learned to find at the service she attended every Sabbath in Washington, but it happened that the subject that day was a plea for aid for the foreign missionary fund and she went away as she had come. Even the music failed to soothe her, being a soulless imitation of some of the ornate flourishes in more pretentious churches given by more skilled musicians. She walked to the hotel by way of the board walk and the restless, sobbing chant of the sea echoed the cry of her heart, and nature's deep-voiced symphony helped her more than the labored arias of art. She went back to her room and picking up her Bible, opened it at random to look among its pages for a word of hope that would still the relentless suffering of her soul. Only the Psalms of David seemed to comfort her; some of them filled with the loneliness of a despair akin to her own, with cries for help in the darkness, and the sound of grappling shadows; also far off shouts of triumph from the heights and songs of victory and But for the first time in her life its teachings failed to bring the comfort she sought. If she had not been taught to accept them so literally, she might have been now a happy wife instead of a fugitive, bearing the mark of Cain. Her anguish of spirit made her rebellious.

She learned from the newspapers that no evidence of the use of poison had been discovered. The dead man's wife had testified in a written statement read at the inquest that her husband had several times before suffered from a sudden attack of the heart. His physician testified that Coburn had recently developed incipient heart trouble and the medical men who conducted the autopsy had pronounced his death due to heart disease. She was vindicated in the eyes of the law, but that did not vindicate her in the eyes of Heaven. But for her he might be living to-day, and much as she disliked the man, she would have given her own life to see him alive again.

She remained in her room until the day that Margaret met her on the board walk. She had not observed either Margaret or the children, but passed on to the very end of the four-mile walk, where she went down the steps on to the sand and approached the water. She looked around and saw no one. It was the remotest part of the beach. She was quite alone with her remorse, and the waves of her own despair answered back to the sad cry of the waves at her feet. She stood for a long time watching the waves roll in; the tide was in and they came nearer and nearer. She looked far out where the farthest wave swelled up and swept forward for a moment

# 254 The Other Side of the Story

before it broke into a long line of white foam and became one of many white, swelling, widening lines that rolled nearer and nearer. Presently the water swept over her feet, but still she stood fascinated. Out there somewhere were the depths of the infinite. Why should she not seek it? The pangs of hell had no terrors for her now so great had been her suffering of the past few days. Only a short walk ahead and she would soon be beyond her depth. She would strangle with the salt taste, perhaps, and struggle with the tide, but no one was in sight and all would soon be over. Why not? She flung her hands upward with a despairing gesture and took a quick step forward.

Just then she heard a voice at her side. She turned and beheld a little child with a face so angelic that her first thought was that he had dropped from the clouds. He held out a pink shell for her to see.

## CHAPTER XXV

### CLEAN HANDS AND A PURE HEART

His small face was wrinkled up with the glare of the sun and his fair curls fluttered in the wind. Ho had started to speak, but stopped, disconcerted at sight of her face. For one moment she gazed down into his innocent face from which a little soul looked out hopefully and wistfully. Then he spoke.

"Just see what I've found!" he cried gleefully.

"Ain't it pretty?"

He wore skirts, and she would have thought him a girl but for his energetic movements as he frolicked about in the water and raised his lusty voice. She looked around and saw no one. Where had he come from? It was dangerous for him to be so near the waves.

"Come," she said as she took his hand, "it's not very safe here for little boys. Let's go farther back." And she led him to higher ground.

Then she saw a young lady not far off seated on the ground with a troop of children playing about her, building and digging in the sand.

"What's your name?" she asked the boy.

" Bobby."

He was digging his bare toe in the damp sand.

# 256 The Other Side of the Story

"Bobby Shafto?" she inquired, smiling for the first time in days.

"No'm," as he pulled at her hand. "Bobby Bloomer's my name, and that's my Cousin Mottie over there."

"And are those your brothers and sisters?"

"Some of them are."

Margaret's party had received additions as they strolled along the beach.

The boy seized Jetty's hand in both his own as he cried:

"Come on, let's play with Cousin Mottie," and when he found she did not yield, he shouted:

"Oh, Cousin Mottie, she won't come!"

Then the girl called Cousin Mottie arose and came forward.

"Don't be naughty, Bobbie," she said.

He was jerking at Jetty's hand and jumping about.

"He seems to have taken a great fancy to you," added Margaret, "and when he does that he's rather trying sometimes."

Jetty bent over and touched her lips to his sunburnt cheek and he ran away to his companions.

"Aren't you from Washington?" asked Margaret.

"Your face is very familiar to me."

"Yes. I'm from Washington."

"I must have seen you there some time."

Jetty thought they had not met before. She was

in no mood for conversation and wanted to get away. Why did this girl try to make friends with her; she who was done with friendships and with earth?

"I'm from Washington, too," said Margaret. "I'm in the office of the Solicitor-General."

For the first time she was willing to herald herself as a Department clerk. She would do anything to break down the barrier of this girl's reserve.

"I've been in office nearly three years, now, and I like it very much indeed."

Jetty showed some interest at last.

- "I've been in about that time, too, but I am anxious to go back home."
  - "What office?"
- "The Treasury Department. I was appointed three years ago next October to a position in the Census Office."

A light broke over Margaret's face.

- "I remember you now! We came to Washington on the same train. Don't you remember my handing you a letter you had dropped? Wait! I can tell you the name; it was Miss Gertrude Downing, wasn't it?"
- "Oh yes, I remember it very well, now, though I had forgotten it."
- "My name is Margaret Castleton. I'm staying at the same hotel with you. I've seen you in the dining-room and I think my room is next to yours."
- "I've been confined to my room almost ever since I came," said Jetty with downcast eyes.

"I remember the first words I heard you speak that day on the train as we sat back to back. Some one was speaking to you about the beautiful weather and you replied, 'Yes, it makes one glad to be alive,' do you remember?"

"Yes, I remember," she answered faintly. They were walking toward the group of children, now, and Margaret called to them that it was time to go home.

"Wouldn't you like to have our company on your way back to the hotel?" Margaret asked. "It's a long walk to take alone," and Jetty, not knowing how to escape, walked back with them, leading Bobby by the hand part of the way and smiling in spite of herself at the artless chatter of the children. Margaret looked on and put in a word now and then as she saw fit, without seeming to force herself or her remarks on the strange girl's attention.

"Tell the lady good-bye, Bobby," said Margaret at last. "We go down this street," and Bobby patiently put up his chubby face to be kissed.

"Perhaps I'll see you to-night," said Margaret to Jetty, and added, "Come in to see me any time, I'm so near by. I'll be very glad to see you again."

They had not gone far when Margaret took the little fellow up on her shoulder and said:

"Little Angel Face, you don't know what you have done this day. You've been the means of saving a human soul from destruction."

"What is a soul, Cousin Mottie?"

"And what is 'struction?" chorused the group.

As Jetty went on toward the hotel her heart felt a little lighter, and on the whole she was glad that Bobby had appeared at the right moment. She took it as an omen that her life might be worth living after all.

"'What is to be will be,' and 'A little child shall lead them,' "she murmured as she looked across the water at a single white sail that stood out against the horizon motionless, apparently, and yet she knew it must be making great speed. Thus was it with the human soul. So far as known it does not stray from the body in whose life it is bound up, and yet what tremendous strides it can make! What heights of joy and ecstasy; what depths of remorse and despair!

She dined early so that Margaret did not observe her again until later in the evening when, as she strolled down the long veranda which ran across one side of the hotel, she looked through the parlor window and saw Jetty seated in a remote corner in conversation with Mr. Bowden, whose white teeth gleamed through the blond fringe on his upper lip. He still wore his hat. Miss Downing held a newspaper in her hand and looked as though she had been interrupted in its perusal. She wore a simple white gown with pink ribbons which gave her pallor the delicate tint of a wild rose. She had seen this man at dinner with his wife a half hour ago; why did he

seek her out here in the remotest part of the reception rooms? In the course of conversation, she told him she expected to leave for Washington Saturday morning.

- "If you wait until Monday, you'll have company," he replied. "I start for Washington Monday evening on the boat from Carlisle."
- "I go by way of Queenstown; the same way I came."
  - "But this is a much better way."
  - "I have a pass through Queenstown."
- "If you'll go my way I'll get you a pass. It's a nice line. The Captain's a personal friend of mine and gives me the privilege of the whole boat. It won't cost you a cent."

By this time the girl had risen to her feet and stood with crestfallen air and down-drooped eyes whose lids were moist. Her bosom heaved with emotion. Why should men regard her thus?

- "Better think about it," added Bowden as she turned away.
- "If I could only be a man for five minutes!" she muttered with clenched hards as she sought her room in a mad fury of passion. As she entered she slammed the door so violently that it trembled on its hinges. Striding forward to pull down the window shade she grasped it so fiercely that it fell down. Looking about for something to pin up in its place, she could find nothing but the table cover, and seiz-

## Clean Hands and a Pure Heart 261

ing that, she tumbled books and papers to the floor. She went for a glass of water and her hand shook so violently that the glass fell with a crash. her rage she seized the pitcher and threw that after the glass. The demon in her soul was roused again. and was venting itself on all the inanimate objects in lieu of some more responsible culprit. She did not realize that these things were the property of the man who had insulted her. She did not reason about it, but for the moment abandoned herself to the rage which consumed her. She overturned the table and chairs; she threw the pillows on the floor and trod on them, and finally she sat down on the floor and threw books, shoes, brushes and everything within her reach at the gas globe and the window panes. denly she paused in her work of destruction.

"I wonder if there's something in my face that made him think--"

She arose and ran to the mirror which was the only breakable object left intact, due, perhaps, to the old superstition. She paused before it, gazing at her own image, fascinated and horrified at the fiendish gleam in the eyes she had always seen so gentle and demure. Then she turned away abruptly and leaning against the opposite wall for support, she murmured in a hoarse voice:

"There's murder in them now! I could do it again! I could do it again!" And she laughed aloud.

The extreme excitement and varied emotions of the past few weeks were telling on her nervous strength. She was on the verge of prostration.

The next morning Margaret went in bathing with the children and was very much occupied until luncheon. She did see not Miss Downing until late in the afternoon when she went to her room to rest. She suspected that the girl had purposely kept out of her way. Soon after entering her room she heard a knock on the door, and on opening it was surprised to see her next door neighbor. She appeared much agitated. She entered without responding to Margaret's greeting and inquired:

- "Do I look like an improper character?"
- "Certainly not."
- "Think what you're saying. If I do I want to know it. I want to know the truth. Look at me well. Is there anything in my demeanor or appearance that would warrant any overture of familiarity from a strange man?"
- "When I look at you," said Margaret, "I can understand why men could go mad enough to fight battles like that of Troy, for I am sure no Helen could have been more beautiful. But you look harassed. You need rest of mind as well of body."
  - "My mind will never rest again, I fear."

Margaret put her arms gently round the girl's waist and drew her to a sitting posture on the side of the bed, for she was trembling like a leaf.

- "I wish I could help you," she said.
- "I seem to be past all help."
- "Oh no!" soothingly.
- "Did you see the man who was talking to me last night in the parlor?"
  - "Yes; Mr. Bowden, the proprietor of this hotel."
- "He insulted me last night. He has worried me all day. He dogs my footsteps. I can't escape him unless I stay in my room."
  - "What has he said to you?"
- "He pays me bold compliments; he tries to persuade me to accept a pass by another road when I go home next week in order to go in his company, and all this under the same roof with his wife. Tell me the truth. Is it something in my face or my manner?"

Margaret assured her that such a thing was out of the question.

- "I'll protect you to-morrow. You just stay with me. I'll go anywhere you wish and he shall not bother you again."
- "But you shouldn't go home so soon," she added. "You are too ill."
- "I have a cold, that is all. I wet my feet yester-day."
- "You must let me prescribe for you to-night. I often help Cousin Mary Bloomer doctor the children. Oh, I wonder! Did you tell anyone when you came that you were in office?"

# 264 The Other Side of the Story

"Yes, I told the clerk that I was in the Treasury. I saw no reason for being ashamed of it."

"That's the trouble. It was very unwise, and as you were alone, it was really imprudent. When you leave Washington for a strange place, or where you are unacquainted, you should never announce yourself as an office girl."

- " Why?"
- "Because they have a bad name."
- " But—\_"
- "Oh yes, I know! There are far more nice, respectable women than bad ones in office, but they have to bear the stigma just the same and all get the credit of being bad, and are always suspected. We are judged by those who have made us notorious in the newspapers. Now you are a very beautiful young woman. You come here alone to a strange hotel and tell the proprietor you are a Department clerk——"
- "I thought that would be some assurance to him of my standing and good character."
- "Quite the contrary. You might as well proclaim yourself as a chorus girl. He suspected you at once, of course."
- "But I have behaved myself. I was never bold or forward in my life, and I couldn't be fast if I tried. And the man——"
- "Is the hotel proprietor and you don't dare to make an enemy of him before you see your bill, of

course. Don't you worry about him. I think I see a way to punish him. I know the man who owns this hotel. He is a friend of my cousin, Senator Bloomer. I'll make it so hot for Mr. Bowden that he'll never dare to annoy any more young lady guests who happen to come without a chaperon to his hotel.

"Now, you lie down and rest well before dinner, and afterwards we'll take a walk until the music begins and then we'll listen to the concert. Oh, I'll take care of you."

"I'm sorry to trouble you so much, a comparative stranger. I felt as though I would go mad if I didn't speak to some one."

"I'm very glad indeed to be of any help," and Margaret kissed her cheek ere she departed.

They dined together that evening and later on found seats just outside the window of the pavilion where the music was in progress, and there they watched the moon rise over the sea. Both of them watched it dreamily as they listened to the overture from Mignon, each wrapt in her own reflections that differed widely in character; Jetty thought of her lost love and sighed.

Margaret's thoughts wandered to Pauline Slattery, and she wondered if the girl was still happy with Truman Kendall.

"How could I ever have dreamed of marrying a man like that?" she thought. "I seem to have friends of such antipodal natures."

She remembered Mrs. Percy, the worldly wise, an utter contrast to the girl at her side; Monsieur de Barnot, the ever-fluent and courtly, and the Hon. Asbury Browning, a rough, unpolished diamond of the ruddy West

She was roused from these reflections by Jetty, who arose as if to move away.

"I must go," she whispered to Margaret. "I cannot bear to hear that song again."

Margaret followed her marvelling. They walked on up the board walk by the water shimmering in the moonlight until they were out of the sound of the music, when Margaret said:

- "I hope you will pardon my curiosity, but I would like to ask why you dislike that song. I happen to be the person to whom it was written and dedicated."
- "Oh, I didn't know that. I don't dislike it exactly; that is, not the song itself, but its associations are too bitter. It brings back a time when I was happy, really happy."
  - "Some one dear to you sang it, I suppose?"
- "No, but its strains were in my ears when he told me good-bye."
  - " Ah!"

They walked on a while in silence. Then Margaret said:

"It ought to have very bitter associations for me, too. The man who dedicated it to me is married to another girl." "The man who told me the name of the song loves me still, and I have reason to think he always will, as I——"

She broke off in surprise at herself for telling the secret of her inmost soul. The spell was about her, the spell of the fair witch of Barcelona, which no man or woman once in the toils had e'er resisted. They went down on the sand and Margaret listened to her story. She said no word of Coburn, but confined her confidences to the history of her love and its unhappy end. Margaret listened quietly, but there was sympathy in her very silence.

When they walked back a few hours later, Jetty's heart was lighter than she had that morning believed to be possible to her again.

She did not appear at breakfast next morning, and Margaret, on going to her room, found the girl flushed with fever and with a pain in her side. A doctor was summoned, who ordered her to keep to her bed, and left instructions for her treatment with Miss Castleton, who seemed to be her only friend. Margaret had never been fond of nursing the sick, but she was so strongly attracted to Jetty that she was glad to have an opportunity to serve her in this capacity. She rose to the occasion.

Jetty became quite ill and was compelled to give up the idea of going back to her work so soon. The doctor suggested that a trained nurse be sent for, but Jetty objected very strongly and Margaret, who guessed rightly that the girl dreaded the expense it would incur, agreed with her, offering to do what was needful herself.

- "I don't need a nurse. I'll be well in a day or two," said Jetty.
- "Yes, of course you will. You won't need any regular nursing, but I'll look after you. I'm so near you, and I'll just open the communicating door so I can look in any time."
- "I don't see how I can afford to stay here very long," Jetty confided to her when they were alone. "I'll have to leave next week some time, or my money will give out."
- "Don't you think of such a thing as money. I have plenty of it, and I'll lend you all that is necessary and you can pay me whenever you choose."
  - "I thought you were a Government clerk, too."
- "I am, but I am a special stenographer and my salary is sixteen hundred dollars a year, and if I didn't have a little left over after paying my board bill, I would be a great spendthrift, wouldn't I?
- "Now you rest easy and don't worry about money or anything alse. Just leave everything to me. My friends call me a witch, you know. I'll look after everything for you. Now go to sleep. If you need me in the night, just strike on the wall with this umbrella, so. I'll look in on you through the night anyway."

Jetty's fever increased rapidly in the night, and

when Margaret came in to see her she found the girl tossing in delirium. She started up at Margaret's approach and cried, her voice hoarse from cold:

"I was furious, but I didn't mean to kill him. My hands are clean and my heart is pure, although I am a murderer. I strangled him slowly, like this!"

She clutched the air with her two white hands. Margaret took them gently in her own.

"Lie down, dear," she said soothingly, "and go to sleep."

"Did you know I was a murderer?"

She broke into wild, incontrollable laughter, and finally sank back on the pillows, exhausted.

Margaret gave her a potion left by the physician, and then sat passing her cool fingers across the heated brow until Jetty sank again into slumber. She watched all night by the sick girl's side. Once Jetty awoke and attempted to rise.

"Listen!" she cried, "the sea is calling; I must go. They want me. They're looking for me." Her dark eyes glittered with a strange, unsteady light. "I am innocent, but I must suffer the penalty of murder. Clean hands, pure heart——"

She broke off, at last yielding to Margaret's gentle, restraining hand.

Next day Jetty, free of fever, inquired anxiously if she had said anything in her delirium of the night before.

She had no return of delirium, as the fever yielded in a few days to the treatment for incipient pneumonia, but she was still in a weak state. Her annual leave had been exhausted when she summoned the physician, and she was now consuming part of her sick leave.

"Don't hesitate to take it all if you need it," said Margaret. "There is such a thing as too much conscience."

It was about the middle of August when a telegram summoned Margaret back to her office. The Solicitor-General was on his way back to Washington, and his private secretary wired to inform her of the fact so that she could return in time. When Jetty saw her packing her things, she cried to Margaret:

- "I'm going back with you."
- "But you're not well enough, are you?"

"I don't care. I can't stay here without you. I don't want to go back through Baltimore alone."

And she turned paler and leaned against the door for support as she thought of the night she sat at supper opposite to a man now dead, with Beppo Bianca standing behind her chair.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Oh, you talked a little."

<sup>&</sup>quot;What did I say?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;I can't say exactly, but it was something about clean hands and a pure heart."

## CHAPTER XXVI

### "TO BE OR NOT TO BE"

When Miss Downing reported for duty to Mr. Jermyn she brought a certificate from the physician who had attended her at Long Point. She had directed him in making it out so that the period covered by it did not account for the last day of her absence from office, the day spent on the journey from Long Point to Washington. Had she been less conscientious she might have had the certificates worded so that it would cover that day also, but she never dreamed of asking the doctor to date it one day ahead. Had she done so all might have gone She took it for granted that she would be allowed time enough to travel back to her post of She had exhausted all her annual leave when she was taken ill, and the remaining two weeks of absence she expected to have credited to sick leave.

But it was not Jermyn's custom to allow any clerk, especially one of the lady clerks, who were always so sly in regard to their sick leave, to present such a report unchallenged. Her absence of one extra day was reported as "absence without leave and without pay." To be reported absent without leave is itself a serious blot on a clerk's record, and to lose a day's

pay after a spell of illness which had cost a pretty sum was a serious matter to Miss Downing. In other words, she was punished for her honesty by losing one day's pay and being marked "absent without leave." True, at the request of the acting chief clerk, she wrote a letter explaining why she was absent one more day than was accounted for on the doctor's certificate. This canceled the record of absent without leave, but did not restore her day's salary.

In addition to this, Jermyn added insult to injury by requiring her to fill out a personal certificate also accounting for the two week's sick leave covered by the doctor's certificate. A personal certificate regarding illness was originally intended to be used only in cases where there is no physician's certificate. usually covers an absence of not more than two days on account of sickness, and is in effect an affidavit certifying on honor that the clerk's absence was caused by sickness which confined him to the house during the entire period of his absence. Even Jetty knew that it was an arbitrary act of tyranny to be required to furnish these two certificates where only one was required by law, and and she gazed at the words "on my honor" and "during the entire period of my absence" with some trepidation.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Must I fill this out, too?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Oh, yes!" answered Jermyn, as he stood not far off watching the effect of his words.

She hesitated. They had already punished her for her honesty; now they meant to make her sign a lie before they would accept the physician's certifi-She had gone out every day that she could do so during her convalescence. Her doctor had insisted that she should. But she did not dare to protest against any act of the terrible Jermyn. was her strength against his or the power back of him? She needed the money so much; in fact, she would not know what to do without the two weeks' salary which she would lose if she refused to sign the paper. She filled out the blanks in the affidavit and signed her name without more ado, and thus for the first time in her life told a deliberate lie, forced to it by her straitened circumstances and the officious exactions of a tyrannical official.

The chief of the Checking Division was acting as chief clerk. Mr. Kimball had come back to Washington in her absence, but had since been called to his home in New York State to the bedside of his brother who was very ill. It was understood that he would be made chief clerk.

Mrs. Perkins had greeted her effusively on her appearance at her desk, and after Jetty had disposed of all the necessary papers and certificates regarding her sick leave, and this consumed several hours, Mrs. Perkins began to tell her the news. She could only do this while Jermyn's back was turned or he was out of the room, so that it took most of the day for Jetty to absorb it all.

"Isn't it sad about Mr. Coburn's death?" she asked finally. "You missed seeing the funeral; the line of carriages was a mile long, and the flowers, Oh, my! That man had lots of friends. We will never have such another chief clerk. I tell you, I feel like my best friend was gone. What makes you so pale, child? You're not well yet, are you? You shouldn't have come back to work so soon. It broke Mr. Jermyn all up, too. He and Mr. Coburn were such friends."

She thought of that last remark more than once in the next few days. It seemed to her that Mr. Jermyn must know or suspect the circumstances of her connection with the death of Mr. Coburn, and was doing his utmost to punish her for it. If they had been such friends, it was quite likely that he knew of Mr. Coburn's plan to follow her to Baltimore to force her to a promise of silence. then he must know who was the mysterious woman that had figured in the newspaper accounts of his death. The thought made her shiver. She could account for his marked persecution on no other She was a skilful and rapid typewriter, and sometimes finished all the work on her desk and would sit waiting for more, it being necessary in many cases for one clerk to be dependent on the movements of another. Whenever Jermyn saw her waiting he would reprimand her for idleness.

<sup>&</sup>quot;I am only waiting for more work."

"Well, but I mustn't know that you're idle; you must look busy anyhow."

If on returning to the room he heard any noise of talking or laughter, he would rebuke the clerks severely, but addressed his reproachful looks at Miss Downing, so that she was forced to the conclusion that he blamed her for the noise. When she had all the current work she could do, and other clerks were out of work, he would bring any extra work to her, and thus embarrass her in keeping up her own desk. If she rose from her chair to brush her dress. or made any preparation whatever for leaving before four o'clock, she was asked to come to the chief's desk, and was there reminded that the office hours extended from nine A.M. to four P.M. It was seldom now that her eyes were dry, and often the copy was blurred and the keys floated in a crystal sea. On one occasion as her fingers flew rapidly over the keys, he called to her loudly and roughly. She looked up in alarm.

"Will you please stop that noise?" he yelled. "I can't hear myself talk. I'm trying to give instructions to this messenger."

How long could she endure it? she wondered. He had been severe enough before, but now she was marked for persecution.

On another occasion she attempted to write a letter during the half hour allowed for luncheon at noon, and had not quite finished at half-past twelve. Jermyn saw her preparing the letter for mailing and at once came to her with a copy of the regulations.

- "Will you please read this?" he said, pointing to a certain paragraph.
- "A gentlemanly demeanor must be preserved toward all persons," she read.
- "That wasn't the one I meant! Here!" he pointed toward the one regarding the thirty minutes recess, and regarded her sharply.
  - "You needn't read it to me. That's all right."

He spoke in much milder tones than before, a little conscience smitten, perhaps, at the ruling of which she had reminded him in the previous paragraph. He first thought that she had purposely chosen to read the ruling as to a gentlemanly demeanor toward all persons. Even a worm will turn.

One day he surprised her by complimenting her work and the rapidity with which she did it. Soon after he brought her a number of cases to treat.

"Do these as quick as you can," he said, "and bring them to me."

There was no one to warn her, so she fell into the trap. The fact that she could do a given number of cases in a specified time was made a basis for the average amount required of her. She finished eight cases in one hour. If she did not average eight cases per hour after that she was called to task severely.

Jetty was glad to put off the inevitable interview

with Roswell Kimball for a while longer. Also, she avoided Jones, fancying from his manner that he meant to remonstrate, or intercede with her on behalf of Kimball.

She had not gone to her old room on Nineteenth Street when she returned to Washington, but instead had taken a hall room in the same house with Margaret, who in the summer still made her home with Mrs. Bandy while the Bloomer family were out of town. Margaret had introduced Jetty to a number of young people who congregated on the steps every evening after dinner where they discussed all manner of subjects with that earnestness and fidelity to details of thought which the heat of a Washington summer usually imparts to the liberal mind. The topics ranged from the higher criticism to the merits of the Washington baseball team. As a rule, when all their favorite subjects were exhausted some one would suggest a trip to the nearest soda fount and hither they would flock, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, for a Dutch treat, and cool off for the night with "chocolate Fridays," "strawberry Sundays," and other popular concoctions. Occasionally they would spend the evening on a trip down the river, or on the suburban cars, both cars and boats being always crowded with other excursionists like themselves, in search of a cool breeze.

Margaret always insisted upon Jetty's company on these excursions, and made every effort to rouse in the girl some vestige of the exhilarating buoyancy of youth which should ever be more or less elastic. But to Margaret's watchful eye there still appeared something intangibly morbid in the attitude of her friend. Was she pursued by the phantom of remorse? If so, what wicked thing could she have done, she, so guileless and so pure? Not that she never smiled, for it was apparent that she made every effort to shake off the mantle of silent reserve, to dispel the shadows that lent a gentle pathos to her movement; that somehow veiled the shrinking appeal of the ever sorrowing eyes, and invested her whole presence with tender mystery.

She had made Margaret her confidant in everything excepting the affair in which she was involved with Wilmer Coburn leading to his death in Baltimore. She could not bring herself to speak of that yet. She became subject to fits of reverie which often seized her as she sat upon the steps in the evening in the midst of the chattering office girls and bantering student clerks. Of what strange things could she be thinking? What secret sorrow preyed upon her fair young brow? It reminded Margaret of a painting she had once seen, a copy of some great artist's Magdalen. She bore the same air of sad and gentle mystery, of nobleness in the drooping head, as if ever repenting and scarcely daring to hope for peace. When Margaret spoke to her she would wake to the present with something like her old winning smile, and renew her struggle for the level of youth and joy that was her due. But one day her smile vanished forever.

As she sat thus one evening in her favorite attitude, she attracted the attention of one of the habitues of the house with whom she had a slight acquaintance. He came and sat beside her and talked of commonplace things at first. Margaret. seeing her friend engaged, went away without disturbing her, and finally the two were left alone on the steps. Jetty's present admirer was a bachelor past his first youth who had served an apprenticeship of many years in Washington, and flattered himself that he made no mistakes in his knowledge of women. But he had misinterpreted the look in this young creature's face; that subtle pathos held too many gradations of love and remorse for him to fathom.

It was not long before Jetty rose trembling with rage.

- "Do I look like a person that would make an appointment to meet you on the street corner? Do I really look so common as that?"
- "I beg your pardon, Miss," said he, realizing his mistake too late, "I assure you I meant no harm; only to take a car ride to Chevy Chase or somewhere."
- "Are you ashamed to be seen leaving the house with me?"
  - "No, but you know how people gossip," he re-

plied, much embarrassed, feeling himself pushed to the wall by this unsophisticated girl.

"I should be ashamed to be seen going out with you. But tell me, is this a Washington custom? Perhaps I'm simply behind the times."

He could find nothing to say.

"I consider your suggestion an insult."

Her voice trembled as she went past him toward the house. Reaching her room, she spent her anger in tears. The conviction began to grow in her mind that she was by nature meant to be what men thought her now, an outcast incapable of inspiring any but unholy thoughts in the minds of men. It was a terrible thought for a young girl.

Margaret was hurrying homeward rather late one evening when, as she went round Thomas Circle, she passed Jetty in conversation with a strange man. He was small and dark, and seemed to be a foreigner. She thought no more about it until she noticed Jetty later in the evening with the same haunted look on her face which she had worn at Long Point. Was the dark foreigner her lover? She banished the thought. Jetty was not the girl to meet a lover clandestinely on the street. Besides, the man had an extremely deferential, almost cringing air that marked him as a servant. For several days Jetty drooped and drooped like a flower withered by tropic blasts.

"What is it, dear?" asked Margaret of her one evening. "You look worried. Or are you ill?"

"Oh no, I'm well, I think," answered Jetty avoiding her glance.

It was the after dinner hour and Margaret was on her way to the steps and had encountered Jetty on her way to the street. It was evident that she wished to go alone, and Margaret, with her ready tact, said no more, but wondered.

Jetty hurried off in the direction of Franklin Square and, making sure that she was not watched, entered the park and approached the fountain in the centre. As she came near to it, a man stepped out from the shadows and spoke to her.

"Here's all the money I have, Beppo," she said in a low tone, "you must know that I'm not rich, but have to earn my living by hard work."

"But I can get no work to do, Madam. I lost my place because I got mixed up in the murder case where I did all I could to keep you out of it, didn't I? They said too many people run after me, all day long; I must go, so here I am without money and without a job. I have been to the Italian Legation; they put down my name, but I have to wait till they need a butler or a footman. I cannot drive. I can do nothing but come to you, unless I go to Mrs. Coburn, who would pay me if I told her who was with her husband when he died."

"Beppo, have mercy!"

"Is this all you can give me, one dollar? You gave me more than that in Baltimore."

- "It is all I have until pay day. Can you wait until then?"
  - "Your pay day? When is that?"
  - "On the fifteenth."
- "I'll wait for you here on the night of the fifteenth of this month then. A beautiful woman like you can always have money. If you give me twentyfive dollar, all right; if not——"

She turned away and left him with his threat unfinished. All her old griefs and fears and passions were surging within her. She had not yet been able to pay Margaret all she owed for medical attention and other expenses of her illness, that young lady having kindly advanced the necessary funds. On the fifteenth of September, only a few days off now, she had planned to send home the usual amount, twenty-five dollars, which was very much needed there. If she yielded to the demands of Beppo the children at home must do without many comforts, even necessities. Margaret could wait indefinitely, but these children could not. What should she do?

She walked on aimlessly under the distant stars. The had thought herself so safe from blame by any but herself, and now she had come back to the point from which she had started. Why had she not been allowed to end it all that day when she wet her feet as the tide rolled in? Why was she saved from it only to be brought back to it again; the old question, "to be or not to be?" She would not fear to

face the accusation of murder alone; nay, she would be glad to suffer some expiation that would atone for what she had done on that terrible night. She could have borne the publicity such an announcement as Beppo threatened would have brought upon her, if there had not been compromising circumstances. She could never hold up her head again, for none would believe her to be a pure and innocent girl after such a disclosure. Better to die at once than to meet the prolonged death which the agony such an avowal from Beppo would bring to her. should she have to suffer so, she who was innocent, while Mrs. Perkins and such as she flourished and smiled and thrived, and seemed happy withal? had a conscience, and Mrs. Perkins had none; that To her disordered brain it began to appear doubtful whether or not virtue was sufficient reward for virtue. Perhaps the dead chief clerk's philosophy had some grain of truth in it after all. At any rate, the old, time-honored platitudes were discredited here in Washington, where they punished one for being truthful and put a premium on dishonesty, and a certain laxness of morals would insure a higher rating on the efficiency report. After all, she had borne without swerving from the high Christian principles instilled at Corinth, without giving way to the artful philosophers who had sought in various ways to corrupt her mind and destroy her soul, her reason began to totter as she wandered in an endless

maze of perplexity, its paths all leading to one question, "to be or not to be?"

Many people passed to and fro on Fourteenth Street. A merry party in an automobile swept round Thomas Circle, the young men bare-headed, the ladies holding on to their hats, all talking gayly. One of them paused suddenly in the middle of a laughing speech and looked over his shoulder. His companions called him a "rubber," and teased him, but he was silent and grave for some moments. He had seen a face under the electric light which he could not banish from his mind. Upon it the ominous shadows of consuming passions lay grimly, a face beautiful above reproach yet stern with sullen despair.

At Rhode Island Avenue a carriage drove leisurely by, a carriage in which leisure and elegance were luxuriously displayed. One of the occupants, a young girl, glanced up from the task of buttoning her glove, and leaned forward with wondering gaze, while her heart fluttered with strange sympathy.

"Mother, look quick!" she cried. "Look what a lovely girl, and how sad! She looks as though all hope was dead!"

And the young girl bore a grave face all through the play, for the image of Jetty's stone-like beauty haunted her all the evening.

At R Street another carriage moved at a more seemly gait, as became its occupants, two statesmen

with big felt hats and turn-down collars. They were full of important affairs, and sought this means of secretly planning some political coup for the impending elections. They paused in their conversation, and one of them turned to watch a passerby as long as the party was in sight.

"Who is it? Some one you know?" queried the other whose energies had been all directed toward elucidating some minor point. "Mighty pretty woman it was!"

"No; I don't know her. Another girl gone wrong, I guess," and his friend again lent his attention to the details of the latest party intrigue.

But Jetty saw nothing; heard nothing; felt nothing save her own isolation and despair. She passed them all, her cheeks blanched, her hand clinching and unclinching at her side.

At U Street she turned to retrace her steps.

Good evening," a voice said at her side, "are you taking a walk?"

She gazed into the face of a man—one whom she had never seen before. She walked several feet beside him before her consciousness was sufficiently roused to realize the situation.

"You have the advantage of me," she said. "I never saw you before."

"Well, that makes no difference, does it?"

For answer she sped past him down the street. Not a car or a policeman was in sight. She hurried on until she reached a side street, into which she turned, glad to be free of the crowd as well as her annoyer.

In another mood this episode might have made little impression, and would have passed unnoticed. But under the stress of passion little things assume wondrous proportions. The faculty of mental perspective loses its balance and a mere incident takes on gigantic dimensions, blotting out for the time all the beauties in the landscape of our lives. It needed only this to complete her self-abasement. She was doomed to suffer disgrace. There was no escape in life. She hurried on aimlessly through the streets of a dimly-lighted section. Darkness! she sought it! Oblivion! she longed for it!

Her mind went back over the events of the summer just passed; the struggles, fears, alternations of hope and despair. She had suffered so much, and for what? A principle of conduct which she had never before had occasion to question. How would her old associates in Corinth regard her troubles if they knew? Ah! they could never understand how an innocent girl could suffer such persecution as this! She knew they would be sure to suspect her of wrong doing. They would even think her as guilty for hesitating, as though she had really married Roswell Kimball. In her present crisis she felt herself a victim, a martyr to the tyranny of office, punished for that which in the pure atmosphere of her simple

village home she had been taught to cherish as the chief jewel of a woman's soul. She wondered how many other weary young feet had trod these streets before her, weighted with the curse of blighted womanhood, innocent as herself no longer, their young hearts filled with hate toward all the world and for themselves more than all.

Where she wandered that night she never remembered. A stranger who left the city next day took away with him a strange vision of a dark figure from which emanated a wild, demoniacal laugh as it pointed toward the Capitol dome. He had inquired of a woman in a dimly lighted street the way to the Capitol building. Some children playing in Lafayette Park suddenly stopped their gambols and rushed homeward at sight of a woman among the shadows who shook her fist with weird energy at the Monument as she muttered something like a curse. things are not good to see or hear. Washington! the nation's capitol! Washington Monument! her heart had swelled with pride in them. hated the sight of them, their very names. ette! his figure stood before her grim in the uncertain light upon its pedestal of stone. He had staked his life for the cause of liberty in the same country which had called upon her to stake her liberty for her life, or its sustenance—the same country whose laws and institutions, or the maladministration of them, were driving her to an ignominious grave.

"No, it is not that. They need the money at home."

"Then you will send it to them of course."

Here they were interrupted by some other members of the household who came into the hall where they stood. Jetty went upstairs to her room; Margaret went out to the front steps to join the merry throng. When they started for the soda fount, Margaret went upstairs to ask Jetty to go, too. She found the girl busy writing, but persuaded her to come out with the crowd. Jetty joined them, and before long seemed the merriest of them all. She joined in the jesting and laughed at all the jokes. Margaret alone noticed that her gayety was unnatural, that it was but the effect of great nervous tension.

## CHAPTER XXVII

#### POTIUS MORI QUAM FOEDARI

Next morning about eleven o'clock Jetty got herself excused from office, telling Jermyn that she felt ill. Her unusual pallor, the uncertain tremor of her voice and movement, convinced even Jermyn that she was ill, and he made no objection beyond a remark to the effect that "the ladies must get in all their sick leave somehow."

On her way out Jetty stopped at a neighboring branch post-office and registered a letter containing the bulk of her month's salary and addressed to her mother. Then she went to a drug-store and from there to her room. She spent some time arranging certain papers and destroying others. Finally she went down to the hall and placed a bulky envelope addressed to Margaret on the table where the mail was placed each day. She also left an envelope for the landlady containing the amount due for a half month's board. Only a few silver pieces were left Then she went out and, stopping to in her purse. post the long delayed letter of explanation to Roswell Kimball, she hailed an electric car that took her in the direction of Brightwood. She had come and gone without removing her hat or speaking to any-

Her dry eyes were shining with an unnatural light; her tears were all exhausted. She came and went like a restless shadow always out of reach. She had answered the fatal question and determined to act accordingly. She had no time to lose. would expect her at the fountain to-night. carried only her purse and a small package and a magazine. The purse contained barely enough money to pay her car fare; the package contained a bottle of laudanum, and she carried the book to avert suspicion. She kept her face bent over it for many miles, though she did not read a line. Once she borrowed a pencil from the conductor and wrote her name and address across the top of the paper back. She did not care to be taken to the morgue when all was over.

She left the car before it reached the end of the line, as she wished to take the same walk she had taken with Roswell Kimball that day so long ago. The suburban line had been lately extended almost to the lovely spot beneath the tree which shadowed the stream ever singing in her memory the witching song of love. But the inroads of civilization had not yet marred the wooded walk over which the branches formed a sylvan canopy, and down this she came with unsteady feet that she forced to go faster. Once she turned aside to prevent crushing a beetle which lay helplessly in her path. She even paused to turn him over so that he might fly away in safety.

That was what she wished to do—to fly away to safety.

She must reach the tree; she could die easier there where they had confessed their love in each other's arms. If her strength would only last!

It was a mild September day, cool enough to suggest the approach of autumn, warm enough to flood the world with the glorious languor of summer. cicada sang his monotonous dirge for the passing of Already a gleam of pale gold shone from the elms and chestnuts. Little clouds of crimson flashed from the black gum leaves, and the brilliant berries of the dogwood and sumach enlivened the gently paling foliage. The edges of the mellowing maple leaves had captured a ray of the golden sun-It was the time of harvesting and merrymaking in the fields, of ripening and falling in the It was the beginning of that death pictured in inanimate nature, ever mindful of recurring life; it was the beginning of the most picturesque of ends, for which nature never mourns, but in whose honor she dons her most gorgeous robes. It was the beginning of a radiant autumn. A gentle breeze stirred the depths of the forest, and the leaves above her head whispered a mournful remonstrance. very blades of grass bent after her imploringly; all the still, luxuriant, intricate life of the forest seemed to wake up and stir with alarm as she passed. sparrow hopped ahead of her uttering a warning

cry, and then perched himself on a branch with his wise little head on one side and regarded her until she came up to him, when he repeated his singular behavior. The breeze grew stronger and the trees began to wave their branches like appealing arms. And now the leaves, the birds, the grass and all nature seemed to vibrate in harmonic unison with the old refrain that seemed to come on the summer wind to her weary ears:

"Just as I am without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!
Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot!"

Margaret returning home rather early, found the envelope on the table in the hall, but did not open it at once as she took it to be an advertisement. She went upstairs to dress for dinner, an opportunity she did not always have and, after putting the finishing touches to her toilet for the evening, she picked up the letter from the dressing table where she had put it down. She held it up before her as she stood with her back to the looking glass and a hand mirror before her face.

"It is very thick for an advertisement," she thought. The address was typewritten and she had

no clue to the writer. Then she sat down, for she had been on her feet for some time and had grown tired. The first lines she read made her cry out in alarm, with blanched cheeks.

"It can't be; yes, it is Jetty's handwriting," she cried, looking at the signature to make sure. Then she fell back half fainting in her chair. The letter ran:

"My dear Margaret.—When you read this I shall be cold in death, where no more pain or shame or sorrow can touch me, and I am going to tell you here what has driven me to such a step. I feel as though my brain was giving way and it may be that I am mad; I don't know, and it will not matter tomorrow. I have come to the conclusion that I must have the brand of Cain. Every man's hand is against me, and my burden is greater than I can bear, as I have told you before. Even you, perhaps, might not wish to breathe the same air with me if I were alive to-morrow, for the story I'm about to tell you would be known to all the world."

Here followed an account of the affair with Wilmer Coburn and the circumstances leading up to his death, giving the causes of her terrible remorse when she had almost drowned herself at Long Point.

"I know not what to make of my burdens, least of all do I understand myself. Sometimes I think that since that night I am possessed by some demon some fiend whose passions I am powerless to control

has awakened within me. My beauty that so attracts the eyes of men, was it designed for their destruction and my own? Every admiring glance speaks to me in a certain language that is growing horribly familiar. They appear to see something in me which is not there, believe me, not there. Mr. Coburn, Mr. Bowden and others, even the servant Beppo took this for granted. Can it be possible that the world believes virtue and beauty incompatible? that virtue belongs to the homely and sour-visaged alone?

"My beauty is a gift of the devil. Every look of admiration is like a knife thrust. I feel the humiliation of a prejudged honor; the mortification of the thought these eyes express and against it all I cannot protest and it has driven me again to despair. Virtue that proclaims itself is virtue doubted. What could I do in the face of Beppo's revelation to-morrow?

"I cannot become inured to what the bold, admiring, accusing eyes would say; every look sends a chill through my heart. What do they see in my Satanic beauty to arouse these thoughts of evil? Accursed beauty! it belongs to hell.

"The only thing I can do is to put an end to it, and the safest way to end it is to die. It is hard enough to live now with my honor really unsullied. What would it be to-morrow when all the world will know me for what I am not? How then could I face

the terrible, admiring, accusing eyes? I dare not think of it. Death is sweet by comparison.

"I do not feel that I am doing wrong when my very existence is a snare of the devil. To remove it from the haunts of men has become my grim duty. Something tells me I shall be happy in the unknown beyond although I set my spirit free with my own hands.

"Before I knew the world I had unconsciously peopled it with heroes, and when I journeyed into the world there was no one to tell me that truth. honor, nobility, or their ideals no longer existed in the minds of men. I was disappointed. I have seen only baseness and perfidy or at best callous indifference to the homely virtues. I have seen innocence derided and truth dragged in the dust. I have tried to persuade myself that I must be partially to blame; that I have taken life too seriously. The inertia of the shock may have paralyzed my senses somewhat, but the plain truth asserts itself to me more forcibly every hour, that there is no place for virtue in the great world if it be alone, accursedly beautiful and unprotected. Every man's hand is against me, and the question is how long could I withstand my stronger brother?

"For my nature craves love with an all absorbing passion; my very soul cries out for it from the depths of my divine despair, and if I live I fear I could never resist the man I love but should not. Or if he

should fail me, how long could I hold out against the admiring, alluring, accusing eyes that meet me at every turn? If I die I do not think my soul is lost, whereas if I wait, who knows? That fear, more horrible than any other has decided me. I am not afraid to die. I am afraid to live.

"It may be hard for you to understand me thoroughly, and I have poured out my whole heart to you in explanation. Dear Margaret, I hope you will not judge me harshly; you, almost my only friend in life, must surely do me justice in my death.

"Remember, it is not from remorse—you saved me from that at Long Point. Wilmer Coburn's death was predestined. I was simply the instrument of God in bringing it about. As much as I have suffered on account of it, I no longer blame myself for it. I meant no harm to him. My act was the impulse of self protection. He alone was to blame.

"I will confess that at first, dear Margaret, I forgot the God of my fathers. He seemed so far away from me when I realized that I stood absolutely alone in my ignorance and blighted faith against a whole world. For a while I felt there could be no God or I should have seen more of His spirit in the hearts of men. For the last few weeks my sufferings have been enough to rouse the dead. You alone stood out from all the rest as a true, noble, disinterested friend. Thanks to you I die in the faith after

all. My situation is enough to merit pity and pardon from a merciful Deity, I feel sure. I can see now that God is still in His Heaven, even though all is not right with the world, and I believe He is more merciful than men think.

"And now, dearest, incomparable, lovely Margaret, do not grieve for me. With my soul still pure I hope to be waiting to welcome you at the gates of Paradise."

She charged Margaret with the delivery of the ring which she wore on a ribbon tied round her throat to Roswell Kimball. She also left all her personal effects to Margaret in payment of the debt still due.

"I feel sure that you will love my memory, Margaret, though you might have loved me no more had I lived to bear the stigma. I tell you the truth when I say that the sky is not more pure than the depths of my heart. My excuse for what I do may be summed up in the words "Potius mori quam foedari." Put that on my tombstone provided I have one. Farewell, my dearest friend, a long farewell."

Upon reading the first lines Margaret started up wildly and rushed out toward Jetty's room, and found it empty. She came upon a group of women whispering in the hall.

"Has anyone seen Jetty Downing to-day?" she asked.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Oh, haven't you heard?"

Some one thrust an evening paper before her eyes and a friendly arm supported her as she read. An electric car had brought the body into town as soon as it was found. It had come at full speed with a clear track ahead in hopes that some spark of life remained. An emergency wagon met the car at Florida Avenue and hurried the body to the hospital, but it was too late to rouse her from the sleep which soon ended in death. Her body had not yet been removed from the hospital.

"I shall have it brought here," cried Margaret, going for her hat.

But she encountered difficulties. The landlady objected strongly; it would be bad for the house. No boarding-house could do a thriving business with crape on the door. And besides, they might expect her to stand for the other expenses.

"I will stand for everything!" urged Margaret; but not until she agreed to pay a half month's rent for the use of the back parlor did the mercenary Mrs. Bandy give her consent.

The next few days were very trying ones for Margaret. She had to arrange all manner of details which were entirely unfamiliar to her experience. She also met all the people who called to see the remains of her friend, and had to weed out

<sup>&</sup>quot;She doesn't know."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Know what? For Heaven's sake tell me where she went before---"

from the merely curious those who came out of real concern and friendship for poor Jetty.

Among the first of these was Diana Wilkins, who had just returned from her trip to Europe. Margaret was so thoroughly convinced of Diana's unselfish interest and real friendship for the dead girl that she not only took her to see the body, but handed her Jetty's last letter to read.

The morning after the tragedy a tall, venerable, white-haired man appeared and asked to see the body. Margaret recognized him as the pastor of the church which Jetty had attended. The good man shed tears over the fair body, so beautiful still in death.

"If I had only been at home when she came to see me the other night! I've no doubt that had I been at home at the time to comfort and advise her she might be living now, a shining light and power in the world, as every pure-faced, pure-souled girl is, whether she knows it or not."

The following Sabbath he departed from his usual style of sermon, taking for his text, "I was hungry and ye fed me not," and took occasion to call the attention of his congregation to the unhappy end of one of their number, reminding his people of an apparent want of warmth and cordiality to the stranger within their gates. It was a reproof hardly deserved, but the good man was greatly wrought up over the terrible end of this one lamb fom his fold.

That afternoon Margaret was summoned to the parlor, where a handsome man with very dark and sunburned complexion awaited her. Suspense had made him pale and haggard, his face was drawn with suffering, his gray eyes full of anguish, his whole being bent and racked with grief. Margaret recognized him as soon as he spoke.

"You are Roswell Kimball," she said, and leading him into the darkened room she uncovered the face so cold and white, and holding up the ring which was still attached to the ribbon as the girl had worn it in life, she said:

"She wished me to give this to you." And she went away and left him with the dead.

He stood for a long time looking down at the features he had so loved. It was not the semblance of death that lay before him, nor yet of sleep. was a calm and dignified repose, with all the warmth of vitality. The mighty spirit that had surged through this being, with its colossal passions, jovs and griefs, still animated the inert body after the soul had departed, giving to it a look of ineffable, mysterious tenderness. The sweetness of human joys, of love and life, played upon those features, effecting a subtle transformation in the lines that mark the sway of emotions. The darkly glowing locks framed a face white and cold, it is true, but upon it lay the light of living hope and peace divine. Her last moments must have been serene, to leave her thus. His heart grew lighter as he gazed upon her.

Slowly and reverently he knelt by the bier, asking forgiveness of the God whom he had rejected, for his harsh judgment of this, the purest, noblest, as well as most beautiful of beings. He had thought her heartless and fickle until her letter came to him The letter had opened his eyes to the day before. the colossal faith with which she had clung to her Puritan belief and her strict interpretation of Christian duty. The letter had also made him realize the sublimity of a love like hers, that could suffer and sacrifice itself upon the altar of renunciation when love itself was so strong that the sacrifice endangered her very reason. In the presence of his dead love he felt humbled and unworthy. that hour he was a changed man.

Rising, he took the ring from its fastening and placed it on the finger where he had slipped it that night that seemed so long ago. He bent and kissed the pale, silent lips, and stood gazing down at her face as he murmured:

"I shall love you always; in death itself and afterwards, my love."

Then he covered the face with its features so perfectly chiseled, with all its marvellous beauty that would never gladden the earth with its presence again, and the delicately molded lips that could smile for him no more.

"Margaret will tell you the rest," her letter had said, and he turned away to seek Margaret.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

## HER MARTYRDOM WAS NOT IN VAIN

It was late one afternoon in October, about two years after the beginning of this story. A red ball of fire hung low over the Virginia hills and a haze of mellow glory flooded the city from the Capitol, which reared its form, majestic in its completeness, to the furthest limits of Rock Creek and across the Potomac to the heights where the flower of the grandest of armies have made their final camping ground and laid down their arms forever. The sky, gorgeous in its shades of crimson and violet, flung its rosy curtain across the stage of the world as though concealing the final act that marks the close of man's achievements.

The late sunbeams were reflected into a room in a Government building on Lafayette Square, where a man sat at a desk busy with a pile of papers. The man's face was rather pale for one so sunburned, and certain lines about the mouth and a sunken look of the eyes showed that he had recently passed through some severe mental strain. The man was Roswell Kimball, now chief clerk of the office of the Seventh Auditor of the Treasury.

He was examining a pile of personal cards in ad-

vance of the preparation of the semi-annual efficiency report of the clerks under his charge. Presently he came to one which he retained much longer than the rest. The blanks on one side of it were made in a delicately traced feminine hand: Name, Gertrude Downing; Age, 22; Born at Corinth, Tennessee; Appointed October 20, 19—, to the Census Bureau; transferred October 15, 19—, to the Treasury Department.

On the other side of the card he read at the top of the page a single entry, Deceased September 15, 19—.

Those bald facts, pathetic in their very brevity, represented the permanent records of her services to the Government. Of the whips and scorns of her outrageous fortune, of the sublime rage that stirred her silent nature like a hurricane among the treetops, of the immortal love that held her fast to dangerous rocks to be rescued only by Giant Despair, of all these there was no record save what he had seen in the still face in its young, white silence, which he had kissed in a last farewell.

But the record of her love in his heart would blossom there as long as he lived. He opened a drawer and took out a photograph, which he placed before him, and it seemed that the dark, plaintive mystery in her languorous eyes was revealed to him at last. Her gentle presence radiated peace into his heart. The picture made her presence seem so real that once more he heard her sweet voice say: "I shall love you always; in death itself and afterwards, my love."

He looked over his shoulder, almost expecting to see her at his side looking down at him with her coy little smile and her lids half closed.

He turned again to his work with a sigh. tried his utmost to be just in making out an efficiency report; he did not let personal feelings control him. He had rearranged the whole table, and in his anxiety to be just had taken pains to mark certain ones that he disliked higher, perhaps, than they deserved. his dealings with the clerks, he put them on their honor, without espionage or unjust suspicion, treating them as honorable men and women instead of In at least one bureau of an executive poltroons. department of the Government a conscientious effort is made to deal absolute justice to the clerks whose weal or woe depends in a large measure on the status of their relations with the chief clerk. This in memory of the love and suffering of the beauteous being enshrined in Roswell Kimball's heart.

The same beams which lit up Kimball's room flung their ruddy glow into another room on Capitol Hill, where Diana Wilkins sat writing at her miniature desk. Her brow was knit into deep lines of thought, her mouth was firmly set. It was evident that her mind was evolving something unusually strenuous even for her. So absorbed was she that she did not

hear a rap at the door until twice repeated. Then she threw down her pen and cried:

"Come in."

But as no one responded, she went and opened the door and admitted a young man.

"Jack! How are you to-day?"

He was of slender build, with pale, intellectual features, and showed the marks of intense application and hard work.

"What makes you work so hard?" he asked, on seeing the pile of closely written pages on the desk.

"Nonsense! Why don't you practice what you preach? You dig away at a desk all day, and then at four o'clock pick up your medicine bag and go your rounds. You don't even rest on Sunday."

"You know very well why I do it. When I have a practice large enough for me to resign my position, and then can establish myself well, I intend to marry you."

"Oh, Jack! Don't let's go over the same old ground again. You know I must keep my position on account of my sisters, and you have your parents to look after, a bedridden father to support. We both are so situated that neither of us can think of resigning any time soon, and I have made up my mind that I will not marry and stay in office, so that ought to settle it."

"I don't want you to stay in office; but I want you to marry me."

"Another D. A. R. speech?"

"No. I'm writing this article for the president of the local suffrage union to read at the next national association."

She leaned back in her chair and read extracts here and there from the following speech. The young man listened with careful attention, making no comment as he did so, save to bestow a smile upon her as she paused to lay the sheets down on the table one by one.

The paper ran, in substance, as follows:

"The Civil Service law of January 16, 1883, was designed to improve the conditions of employment in the Government service, and that it has done so in a great measure cannot be doubted, although its enemics have never ceased to fight against it, or evade Its most dangerous foes are those men in the executive departments of the United States, who are protected by it and who exercise the privilege of selecting employees through the Civil Service Commission. These men are responsible for the fact that the names of women eligibles are no longer certified by the Commission, because in their requests for a certification of eligibles, male eligibles alone are specified. The records of the Commission show that any number of women eligibles with averages

of eighty-nine to ninety-eight, with high marks in stenography, have their names stricken off their rolls annually at the expiration of the year of eligiblity, simply because the Commission has no chance to certify the names to the executive departments. the same time, these same departments are daily requesting and receiving certifications of male eligibles with an average standing of barely seventy, and some have been certified as stenographers whose mark on stenography was only fifteen. The Civil Service Commission is not to blame for this. It has recently issued a circular to all department officials requesting that in their letters asking the Commission for a certification of eligibles they do not bar female eligi-So far as known this circular has been practically ignored.

"What is the reason of this? It will be remembered that in the crisis produced by the late war an Act of Congress authorized a large number of emergency appointments in the departments, and to these places a great number of women were appointed. Why were women allowed on this temporary roll, which was afterward taken into the Civil Service by an Executive order, when those women who have passed a rigid examination and whose first-class qualifications none can deny are not wanted? It is not a mystery to those who are already in the service, who have been initiated into the old traditions. It is a common thing to see women of Puritan ancestry

and the best blood of the South laboring for their bread side by side and closely associated with the mistresses of certain statesmen and other officials of the Government, winking their modest eyes at a state of affairs which if known or suspected outside of Washington would cause the good, honest yeomanry of the nation to rise up as one man with a tremendous outburst of indignation. I hesitate to make the statement that these women eligibles of good standing in the communities where they live are not wanted because they are not of this stamp, but cold reasoning forces me to this conclusion.

"This type of office woman is unfortunately the one that has been most advertised in the daily press, as we all know, and the impression has prevailed that her character is that of the average office girl. There could not be a more cruel and unjust idea. Side by side with these modern Aspasias are some of the noblest, purest and best of women, who have to bear the stigma wherever they go, and, out of Washington, scarcely dare acknowledge themselves to be Government clerks. The innocence that patiently endures unharmed the daily intercourse with painted They are compelled to vice is innocence indeed. smile and congratulate such women when they are promoted to higher salaries than their own, for virtue has to be its own and only reward when promotions are distributed by these same officials who refuse to ask for certification of the names of women eligibles on the list of the Civil Service Commission. These men punish virtue in many petty ways and reward immorality by promoting their women favorites to higher salaries on the Government rolls.

"True, it is owing to the influence of these favorites that the good women in office enjoy certain privileges in regard to leaves of absence. Prior to the late war, Sundays and holidays were counted in both sick and annual leave, and in certain bureaus no sick leave was granted at all, but soon after the creation of a temporary roll under the emergency act, a clause in a certain appropriation act stipulated that Sundays and holidays were not to be counted in the clerks' annual leave, thus giving at least five more days' leave to each clerk. These women are the ones who use up all their sick leave each year, and thus establish precedents which make it easier for those more deserving when they also need a similar privi-I wish to remark here, although it is far from my purpose to array one sex against the other, that it is not women clerks alone who abuse the privilege of sick leave; that is done by male clerks to a much larger extent than is generally supposed or acknowl-This statement is given because so much has been said of recent years regarding the abuse of sick leave by the women clerks, and the impression has been given that women alone use all their sick leave each year.

"Why should these heads of bureaus prefer a poor

male clerk to a good, honest, pure-minded woman? It has been shown that they do not object to women clerks when they can select some, at least, of the True, the heads of departments usually leave such matters to their chief clerks, whose tenure of office is longer under Civil Service law, and who generally do all they can to discourage respectable young women who desire positions under the Government, presumably because they prefer women of another stamp. I do not believe that the heads of departments or the Chief Executive are aware of this deplorable condition of affairs, and it is the purpose of this article to open their eyes to unpleasant truths. The Government clerk has no rights as such. never a member of any organization of an aggressive nature. He is muzzled and kept in complete subjection, no matter what indignities are put upon him. The least sign of sympathy with us in this movement for their good would endanger the positions they hold. They will be in full sympathy with us, never fear, but they will never dare to openly acknowledge it.

"The number of suicides in the District increases yearly, as does also the ratio of those insane, and it is understood that an alarming proportion of both are under thirty years of age. These suicides! they speak to us from the grave in thunders of white silence! A law should be made requiring that an inquest be held over the body of each suicide, and

the person found culpable for the deed held for A similar inquiry should be made into homicide. the sources of insanity. It would develop causes hitherto unsuspected. The persecutions inflicted by the insolence of office-holders who are protected in their positions by the Civil Service law while seeking every possible means to evade that law, will be found largely responsible. The power of these men over the clerks working under their espionage should The Civil Service law should apply be restricted. only to the rank and file. The chief clerks and division chiefs should be appointed every four years.

"As regards women, it is a state of affairs similar to what is said to exist in a measure on the stage, where promotion in the ranks depends largely on favor, where the chorus girl who would make her way must not only please by her work, but make certain concessions.

"Why is not this farcical Civil Service law repealed? If not repealed, why is it not obeyed? Why are the public revenues spent on the salaries of a Civil Service Commission that is not allowed to do its duty? Either the Commission should be abolished or else it should be allowed to exercise its duties equitably before the law, dealing justice to both sexes.

• "It is understood that a movement is on foot having in view the promotion of the chief clerks of the various bureaus in the several departments. Law-uakers of the Capitol! if you would do your duty,

# Her Martyrdom Was Not in Vain 313

look into the records of these men before you honor them! If an investigation develops the fact that these officials are notorious for their severe rulings. and that they make special efforts to enforce the merit system, inquire more closely into these methods, for these officials are the very ones who abuse their power. Investigate their conduct toward the friendless ones brought into the Civil Service, more especially those of the female sex. In this way it may be possible to find how few of them have endeavored to give the reward to merit alone. is not expected that Civil Service rules will ever be enforced so strictly that the standing of a clerk will not be affected by his political affiliations. not ask for the impossible. But we do ask for respectable women the same consideration that is awarded to men. Why should she suffer humiliation merely because she is a virtuous woman? God pity the friendless woman thrust by the methods of the Civil Service law into a service where that law is despised; where she is rewarded for vice and punished for virtue!

"It is not befitting for the lawmakers of a great nation to encourage crime or to reward it.

"For years this Association has stood for the rights of woman, and particularly for equal suffrage rights upon which subject public opinion is widely at variance. I think I may safely say that it has caused more discussion than any other political question in the United States of late years. It is still an open

question which we hope to see decided favorably to women some day.

- "But the right I demand to-day is one which will appeal to the manhood of every citizen of the Republic; a right of woman which none can deny; a right accorded her since the dawn of civilization; the right to keep her honor unsullied without persecution; the right to maintain her virtue with dignity and without reproach from her superiors in the Government service.
- "May God hasten the day when the honor of woman will be as sacred to Uncle Sam as to herself or her Maker!"

The young man sighed as she laid down the last sheet and returned Diana's gaze.

- " Well, Jack?"
- "I suppose Uncle Sam is to be ignorant of its authorship?"
  - " Certainly."
- "Because if the Government officials ever knew that it was done by a Government clerk, they would——"
  - "Off with my head, of course."
- "And then, perhaps, you would have to marry me."
- "You didn't tell me what you thought of the paper."
- "It's a very able article. I am quite proud of you."
  - "Oh, it isn't finished yet. It's to be revised and

- "And I admire you all the more. All the Suffragist leaders have husbands, you know."
  - "I have a horrid disposition, Jack."
  - "Really? I don't know the meaning of the word."
- "And of course you know why they call me 'Rags,'" she brought down her arms close to her side as she spoke.
  - "It is one of the prettiest names I ever heard."
- "Oh, you hard-headed boy. I suppose you've come to go out to dinner with me? Well, let's go."
  - "Is the discussion postponed?"
- "Indefinitely. I shall never marry and stay in office."

The same golden sunset hour finds Margaret Castleton in tears. She does not go up to her room and sob for hours alone until night comes, and through the dark hours, like her lost friend. Instead she goes for sympathy and comfort to Mrs. Percy's room. That lady is much astonished at the spectacle of tears in merry Margaret's eyes.

"What in the world is the matter, dear Mottie?" she asks.

For answer Margaret points to a paragraph in a paper she has brought. It is one of those scurrilous sheets which start up from time to time in Washington, existing by methods which savor of blackmail, fawning in its flattery or venomous in its backbiting.

It had not used Miss Castleton's name, but the reference was unmistakably to her. It gave a short resume of her career and rapid promotion since her arrival in Washington, her recent promotion to \$1,800, making dark hints as to the reasons therefor. She was a butterfly of fashion holding down a soft Government job at a good salary, reporting for duty regularly on pay-days only, to the official she served as stenographer, who was more than kind.

"That poor old Solicitor General!" cries Mrs. Percy. "How perfectly ridiculous! In Washington no one is above suspicion."

"Oh, he can stand it! He's a man and can fight!" cries Margaret from the sofa where she had taken refuge among the pillows, "but I—what can I do? It is a stigma that will follow me all my life long. I can never get over it, never!"

"Senator Bloomer could make him retract his words. He is probably fishing for a bribe anyway."

"Cousin Bloomer is not rich. He has no money to spend that way, and neither have I."

"You have other friends."

"What friends?"

"There's Mr. Browning for one."

"He would go and knock the man down and get arrested for it, and it would be in the papers; the man who wrote the article would get an advertisement for his miserable paper, and I would be worse off than ever."

A pause ensues; Margaret sits chin in hand think-

ing, while Mrs. Percy looks at her meditatively. Suddenly Margaret rises and walks restlessly to and fro.

"I must do something myself," she says. "I believe I'll have to write a book in defense of the office girl."

"I've no doubt you would make a success of it," says Mrs. Percy; "only let me put in a word of warning. Do you mean to say that you intend to perpetrate a Washington novel?"

"I had that in mind, only I wouldn't-"

"That's just it. I knew you wouldn't; but just the same, it can't be impressed upon your mind too strongly. Whatever you do, don't——"

"I won't, I won't," cried Margaret. "I give you my word that I won't have for heroine a whining office girl without backbone enough to resist a little temptation, or without moral sense. She is to be a real live character, idealized from life."

"And be sure you don't-"

"That I won't! I will leave out the overdone Congressmen who persecutes the helpless office girl, and threatens her dismissal and all that, because she scorns him."

"Whoever heard of a real Congressman running after a girl as they do in those books? They're too careful of their reputation as a rule; too much afraid of the reproach of their precious constituents."

"Besides, it isn't at all necessary. In Washington there are women enough who do the running

after the Congressmen. No one but the reader of the average Washington novel ever believes it possible for a Senator or Representative to pursue one girl very long. He meets too many others on the way, all determined not to let him slip. All Washington knows this only too well."

- "Poor old Washington! Always misrepresented, even in fiction."
- "The office girl has persecutors, and perhaps once in a great while one of these may be in Congress, but no man has such an opportunity to make her life miserable as her division chief. Now, to make a story realistic——"
  - "But above all, don't make it commonplace."
- "No, I mean realistic enough to satisfy a reasonable taste and still be an interesting story; something at least worth reading."
- "That's it. Have a story to tell before you try to write one."
- "Three things are necessary—place, plot and people."
- "You have selected the place. How about the other two?"
  - "As for the plot, I'm ready for that, too."
  - "You will make yourself the heroine, of course?"
- "No," says Margaret, and her voice softens at the memory of one whose sufferings had been greater than her own, "my heroine shall be Gertrude Downing."



